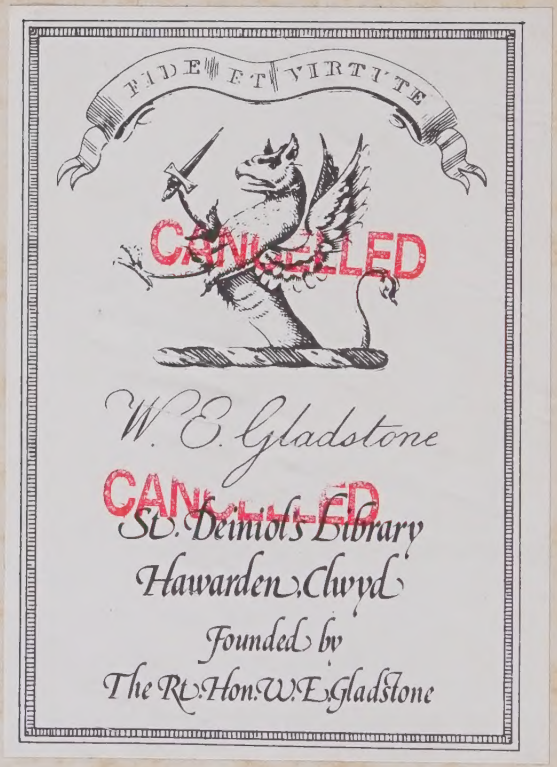
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THE PARABLES

NOTES

ON

THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD

BY

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH, D.D.

ARCHBISHOP

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

THE present popular edition of the PARABLES, *with a translation of the notes*, carries out an intention which had long been in the Author's mind, but which want of leisure—and, when leisure at last was granted, failing health—prevented him from accomplishing.

The text has received the Author's latest emendations, as made by him in his own copy during the last years of his life.

The notes are translated so as to bring them within the reach of general readers. In the few cases in which there existed any recognized versions of the original works quoted, these have been followed, so far as was compatible with correctness; but more often, no such version existing, a new translation has been made. The whole of the work, which has been valued by the Church

and by scholars for nearly fifty years, is now brought in its entirety within the reach of all, and takes for the first time its final form. The Author never allowed his books to be stereotyped, in order that he might constantly improve them, and permanence has only become possible when his diligent hand can touch the work no more.

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE DEFINITION OF THE PARABLE.

WRITERS who have had occasion to define a parable[1] have found it no easy task to give such a satisfying definition as should omit none of its distinctive marks, and at the same time include nothing superfluous and merely accidental. Rather than attempt to add another to the many definitions already given,[2] I will seek to note briefly what seems to me to differ-

[1] Παραβολή, from παραβάλλειν, projicere, objicere, *i.e.* τὶ τινί, to put forth one thing before or beside another; and it is often assumed that the purpose for which they are set side by side is, that they may be *compared* one with the other: thus Plato (*Phil.* 33, B): παραβολὴ τῶν βίων: and Polybius (i. 2. 2.): παραβολὴ καὶ σύγκρισις. In this way we arrive at that technical use of παραβολή, which is not, however, peculiar to sacred Greek; for we meet it in Aristotle (*Rhet.* ii. 20), and in Longinus (παραβολαὶ καὶ εἰκόνες, 37). At the same time this notion of *comparison* is not necessarily included in the word, the whole family of cognate words, as παράβολος, παραβόλως, parabolanus, being used in altogether a different sense, yet one growing out of the same root. In all these the notion of *putting forth* is retained, but not for the purpose of comparison, which is only the accident, not of the essence, of the word. Thus παράβολος, qui *objicit se* præsentissimo vitæ periculo, one who *exposes* his life, as the parabolani at Alexandria who buried infected corpses.—The chief Latin writers are not agreed in their rendering of παραβολή. Cicero (*De Inv. Rhet.* i. 30) represents it by collatio; Seneca (*Ep.* 59) by imago; Quintilian (*Inst.* v. 11. 8) by similitudo.

[2] Tryphon, a Greek grammarian of the age of Augustus, has the

ence it from the fable, the allegory, and such other forms of composition as are most nearly allied to, and most closely border upon it. In the process of thus distinguishing it from those forms of composition with which it is most likely to be confounded, and of justifying the distinction, something will have been said for the bringing out of its essential properties more clearly than in any other way I could hope to do this.

1. There are some who have identified the parable with the Æsopic *fable*, or drawn a slight and hardly perceptible line of distinction between the two: as for instance Lessing and Storr, who affirm that the fable relates an event as having actually taken place at a certain time, while the parable only assumes it as possible. But not to say that examples altogether fail to bear them out in this assertion, the difference is much more real, and far more deeply seated, than this. The parable is constructed to set forth a truth spiritual and heavenly: this the fable, with all its value, is not. It is essentially of the earth, and never lifts itself above the earth. It never has a higher aim than to inculcate maxims of prudential morality, industry, caution, foresight, and the like; and these it will sometimes recommend even at the expense of the higher self-forgetting virtues. The fable just reaches that pitch of morality which the world will understand and

following definition: 'A story which by a comparison of something similar gives a forcible presentation of its subject.' Many from the Greek Fathers are to be found in Suicer, *Thes.* s. v. παραβολή. Jerome, on Mark iv., defines it thus: 'A useful discourse, expressed under an appropriate figure, and containing in its folds some spiritual lesson'; and elsewhere (*Ad Algas.*), 'as a shadow going before the truth.' Bengel: 'A parable is a form of speech which by means of a fictitious narration, which yet resembles the truth, and is taken from matters belonging to the usages of ordinary life, represents truths which are less known or of a moral nature.' Teelman: 'A parable is a similitude taken from ordinary and obvious matters for conveying some spiritual and heavenly meaning.' Unger (*De Parab. Jesu Naturâ*, p. 30): 'A parable of Jesus is a comparison by means of a little narrative, imaginary yet resembling truth, by which some sublimer matter is seriously illustrated.'

approve. But it has no place in the Scripture,[1] and in the nature of things could have none, for the purpose of Scripture excludes it; that purpose being the awakening of man to a consciousness of a divine original, the education of the reason, and of all which is spiritual in man, and not, except incidentally, the sharpening of the understanding. For the purposes of the fable, which are the recommendation and enforcement of the prudential virtues, the regulation of that in man which is instinct in beasts, *in* itself a laudable discipline, but *by* itself leaving him only a subtler beast of the field,—for these purposes, examples and illustrations taken from the world beneath him are admirably suited.[2] That world is therefore the haunt and the main region, though by no means the exclusive one, of the fable. Even when men are introduced, it is on the side by which they are connected with that lower world; while on the other hand, in the parable, the world of animals, though not wholly excluded, finds only admission in so far as it is related to man. The relation of beasts to one another not being spiritual, can supply no analogies, can be in no wise helpful for declaring the truths of the kingdom of God. But all man's relations to man are spiritual; many of his relations to the world beneath him are so as well. His lordship over the animals, for instance, rests on his higher spiritual nature, is a dominion given to him from above

[1] The two fables of the Old Testament, that of the trees which would choose a king (Judg. ix. 8–15), and of the thistle and the cedar (2 Kin. xiv. 9), may seem to impeach the universality of this rule, but do not so in fact. For in neither is it God who speaks, nor yet messengers of his, delivering his counsel; but men, and from an earthly standing-point, not a heavenly. Jotham will teach the men of Shechem their folly, not their sin, in making Abimelech king over them; the fable never lifting itself to the rebuke of sin, as it is sin—this lesson lies outside of its sphere —but only in so far as it is also folly. And Jehoash, in the same way, would make Amaziah see his presumption and pride, in challenging a mightier to the conflict; not thereby teaching him any moral lesson, but only giving evidence in the fable which he uttered, that his own pride was offended by the challenge of the Jewish king.

[2] The greatest of all fables, the *Reineke Fuchs*, affords ample illustration of all this; it is throughout a glorifying of cunning as the guide of life and the deliverer from all evil.

(Gen. i. 28; ii. 19; ix. 2; Ps. viii. 6–8); will serve, therefore, as in the instance of the shepherd and sheep (John x.), and elsewhere, to image forth deeper truths of the relation of God to man.

It belongs to this, the loftier standing-point of the parable, that it should be deeply earnest, allowing itself therefore in no jesting nor raillery, at the weaknesses, the follies, or the crimes of men.[1] Severe and indignant it may be, but it never jests at the calamities of men, however well deserved, and its indignation is that of holy love: while in this raillery and in these bitter mockings the fabulist not unfrequently indulges;[2] he rubs biting salt into the wounds of men's souls—it may be,

[1] The definition by Phædrus of the fable squares with that here given:

> Duplex libelli dos est, quod *risum* movet,
> Et quod *prudenti* vitam consilio monet.
>
> Twofold my booklet's dowry, to move mirth,
> And by wise counsel to wise life give birth.

[2] As finds place, for instance, in La Fontaine's celebrated fable,—La Cigale ayant chanté tout l'été,—in which the ant, in reply to the petition of the grasshopper, which is starving in the winter, reminds it how it sung all the summer, and bids it to dance now. That fable, commending as it does foresight and prudence, preparation against a day of need, might be compared for purposes of contrast to more than one parable urging the same, as Matt. xxv. 1; Luke xvi. 1; but with this mighty difference, that the fabulist has only worldly needs in his eye, it is only against these that he urges to lay up by timely industry a sufficient store; while the Lord would have us to lay up for eternal life, for the day when not the bodies, but the souls that have nothing in store, will be naked, and hungry, and miserable,—to prepare for ourselves a reception into everlasting habitations. The image which the French fabulist uses was very capable of such higher application, had he been conscious of any such needs (see Prov. vi. 8, and on that verse, Cotelier, *Patt. Apost.* vol. i. p. 104, note 13; and Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps.* lxvi. 2). In Saadi's far nobler fable, *The Ant and the Nightingale*, from whence La Fontaine's is undoubtedly borrowed, such application is distinctly intimated. Von Hammer has in this view an interesting comparison between the French and the Persian fable (*Gesch. d. schön. Redek. Pers.* p. 207). The fable with which Cyrus answered the Ionian ambassadors, when they offered him a late submission, is another specimen of the bitter irony of which this class of composition is often the vehicle (Herodotus, i. 141).

perhaps generally is, with a desire to heal those hurts, yet still in a very different spirit from that in which the affectionate Saviour of men poured oil and wine into the bleeding wounds of humanity.

There is another point of difference between the parable and the fable. While it cannot be affirmed that the fabulist is regardless of truth, since it is neither his intention to deceive, when he attributes language and discourse of reason to trees and birds and beasts, nor is any one deceived by him; yet the severer reverence for truth, which is habitual to the higher moral teacher, will not allow him to indulge even in this sporting with the truth, this temporary suspension of its laws, though upon agreement, or at least with tacit understanding. In his mind, the creation of God, as it came from the Creator's hands, is too perfect, has too much of reverence owing to it, to be represented otherwise than as it really is. The great Teacher by parables, therefore, allowed Himself in no transgression of the established laws of nature—in nothing marvellous or anomalous; He presents to us no speaking trees nor reasoning beasts,[1] and we should be at once conscious of an unfitness in his so doing.

2. The parable differs from the *mythus*, inasmuch as in the mythus the truth, and that which is only the vehicle of

[1] Klinckhardt (*De Hom. Div. et Laz.* p. 2): 'A fable illustrates some precept of ordinary life and manners in a simple and sometimes jocose story by means of an imaginary example generally contrary to the truth of nature: a parable, on the other hand, illustrates some loftier meaning (pertaining to things divine) in a story which, though simple, is weighty and serious, by means of an example so devised as to seem to be in the closest agreement with the nature of things.' And Cicero (*De Invent.* i. 19): 'The fable is a story which contains matter neither true nor resembling truth.' But of the parable Origen says, 'A parable is a story professedly of something which takes place, which does not indeed take place according to the account given, but is capable of taking place.' There is, then, some reason for the fault which Calov finds with Grotius, though he is only too ready to find fault, for commonly using fabula and fabella in speaking of our Lord's parables, words which certainly have an unpleasant sound in the ear. Compare Pressensé, *Jésus-Christ, son Temps, sa Vie, son Œuvre*, p. 368.

the truth, are wholly blended together: and the consciousness of any distinction between them, that it is possible to separate the one from the other, belongs only to a later and more reflective age than that in which the mythus itself had birth, or those in which it was heartily believed. The mythic narrative presents itself not merely as the vehicle of the truth, but as itself being the truth: while in the parable, there is a perfect consciousness in all minds, of the distinctness between form and essence, shell and kernel, the precious vessel and yet more precious wine which it contains. There is also the mythus of another class, the artificial product of a later self-conscious age, of which many inimitable specimens are to be found in Plato,[1] devised with the distinct intention of embodying some important spiritual truth, of giving an outward subsistence to an idea. But these, while they have many points of resemblance with the parable, yet claim no credence for themselves either as actual or possible (in this differing from the parable), but only for the truth which they embody and declare.[2] The same is the case when upon some old legend or myth that has long been current, there is thrust some spiritual significance, clearly by an after-thought; in which case it perishes in the letter that it may live in the spirit; all outward subsistence is denied to it, for the sake of asserting the idea which it is made to contain. To such a process, as is well known, the later Platonists submitted the old mythology of Greece. For instance, Narcissus falling in love with his own image in the water-brook, and pining there, was the symbol of man casting himself forth into the world of shows and appearances, and expecting to find the good that would answer to his nature there, but indeed finding only disappointment and death. It was their meaning hereby to vindicate that mythology from charges of absurdity or immorality, to put a moral life into it, whereby it should maintain its ground against the new life of Christianity; though, indeed, they were only thus hastening the

[1] Thus *Gorg.* 523, *a*; *Phædo*, 61. *a*; cf. Plutarch, *De Ser. Num. Vind.* 18.

[2] The λόγος ἐν μύθῳ.

destruction of whatever lingering faith in it there might yet survive in the minds of men.

3. The parable is also clearly distinguishable from the *proverb*,[1] though it is true that, in a certain degree, the words are used interchangeably in the New Testament, and as equivalent the one to the other. Thus, 'Physician, heal thyself' (Luke iv. 23), is termed a parable, being more strictly a proverb;[2] the same may be affirmed of Luke v. 36; which is a proverb or proverbial expression, rather than a parable, which name it bears: compare 1 Sam. xxiv. 13; 2 Chron. vii. 20; Ps. xliv. 14; Wisd. v. 3. On the other hand, those are called 'proverbs' in St. John, which, if not strictly parables, yet claim much closer affinity to the parable than to the proverb, being in fact allegories: thus Christ's setting forth of his relations to his people under those of a shepherd to his sheep, is termed a 'proverb,' though our Translators, holding fast to the sense rather than to the letter, have rendered it a 'parable' (John x. 6: cf. xvi. 25, 29).[3] It is easy to account for this interchange of the words. Partly it arose from one word in Hebrew signifying both parable and proverb;[4] which circumstance must have had considerable influence upon writers accustomed to think in that language, and is itself to be explained from the parable and proverb

[1] Παροιμία, that is, παρ' οἶμον, a *trite*, *way*side saying; or, as some have understood it, a saying *removed from* the ordinary *way*, an uncommon saying. Some derive it from οἶμη, a tale, or poem; yet Passow's explanation of the latter word shows that at the root the two derivations are the same. See Suicer, *Thes.* s. v. παροιμία.

[2] It is current at least now in the East, as I find it in a collection of Turkish proverbs, in Von Hammer's *Morgenl. Kleeblatt*, p. 63.

[3] Παραβολή, I need hardly say, never occurs in the Gospel of St. John, nor παροιμία in the Synoptic Gospels.

[4] מָשָׁל. This word the LXX render παροιμίαι in the title of that book which we also call *The Proverbs* of Solomon; and παραβολή elsewhere, as at 1 Sam. x. 12; Ezek. xviii. 2. In *Ecclesiasticus* the two words more than once occur together: thus, xlvii. 17, παροιμίαις καὶ παραβολαῖς, 'the countries marvelled at thee for thy proverbs and parables': xxxix. 3, ἀπόκρυφα παροιμιῶν ἐν αἰνίγμασι παραβολῶν, 'He will seek out the secrets of grave sentences, and be conversant in dark parables.'

being alike enigmatical and somewhat obscure forms of speech, 'dark sayings,' uttering a part of their meaning, and leaving the rest to be inferred.[1] This is evident of the parable, and is not in fact less true of the proverb. For though such proverbs as have become the heritage of an entire people, and have obtained universal currency, may be, or rather may have become, plain enough; yet in themselves proverbs are very often enigmatical, claiming a quickness in detecting latent affinities, and not seldom a knowledge which shall enable to catch more or less remote allusions, for their right comprehension.[2] And yet further to explain how the terms should be often indifferently used,—the proverb, though not necessarily, is yet very commonly, parabolical,[3] that is, it rests upon some comparison either expressed or implied, as for example, 2 Pet. ii. 22. Or again, the proverb is often a concentrated parable; for instance, that one above quoted, 'If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch,' might evidently be extended with ease into a parable; and not merely might many proverbs thus be beaten out into fables, but they are not unfrequently allusions to or summings up in a single phrase of some fable already well known.[4]

[1] So we find our Saviour contrasts the speaking in proverbs or parables (John xvi. 25) with the speaking plainly (*παῤῥησία, i.e. πᾶν ῥῆμα*, or every word).

[2] For instance, to take two common Greek proverbs: *Χρύσεα χαλκείων* would require some knowledge of the Homeric narrative; *βοῦς ἐπὶ γλώσσης* of Attic moneys. The obscurity that is in proverbs is evidenced by the fact of such books as the *Adagia* of Erasmus, in which he brings all his immense learning to bear on the elucidation, and yet leaves many with no satisfactory explanation. Cf. the *Paræmiographi Græci* (Oxf. 1836), pp. 11–16.

[3] It is not *necessarily*, as some have affirmed, a *λόγος ἐσχηματισμένος, i.e.* figurative: thus, *Ἐχθρῶν ἄδωρα δῶρα*, 'a foe's gifts are an ill-having,' or *Γλυκὺς ἀπείρῳ πόλεμος*, 'He jests at scars that never felt a wound,' with innumerable others, are expressed without figure; but very many are also parabolical, and generally the best, and those which have become most truly popular.

[4] Quintilian: 'The *Παροιμία* is a shorter fable, . . . the parable sets forth the things compared at greater length.' On the distinction

4. It remains to consider wherein the parable differs from the *allegory*. This it does in form rather than in essence; in the allegory an interpenetration of the thing signifying and the thing signified finding place, the qualities and properties of the first being transferred to the last, and the two thus blended together, instead of being kept quite distinct, and placed side by side, as is the case in the parable.[1] Thus, John xv. 1–8, 'I am the true Vine, &c.,' is throughout an allegory, as there are two allegories scarcely kept apart from one another, John x. 1–16; the first, in which the Lord sets Himself forth as the Door, the second as the good Shepherd, of the sheep. So, 'Behold the Lamb of God,' is an allegorical,—'He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter,' a parabolical expression.[2] The allegory needs not, as the parable, an interpretation to be brought to it from without, since it contains its interpretation within itself; and, as the allegory proceeds, the interpretation proceeds hand in hand with it, or at all events never falls far behind.[3] And thus the

between the παραβολή and παροιμία there are some good remarks in Hase, *Thes. Nov. Theol. Philolog.* vol. ii. p. 503; and in Cremer, *Wörterbuch d. Neutest. Gräcität*, p. 83, s. v. παραβολή.

[1] Thus Lowth (*De Sac. Poës. Heb. Præl.* 10): 'To this must be added what may be taken as a law of the parable, namely, that it is self-consistent in all its parts, and does not admit of any blending of the things themselves with the things called in to illustrate them. In this it differs greatly from the first kind of allegory, which in its gradual advance from the simple metaphor does not in all cases continuously exclude the thing itself, but sinks gradually from the thing itself into those transferred for its illustration, and by certain steps returns with no greater effort from the thing transferred to the thing itself.'

[2] Thus Isai. v. 1–6 is a parable, of which the explanation is separately given, ver. 7; while Ps. lxxx. 8–16, resting on the same image, is an allegory; since, for instance, the casting out of the *heathen*, that the *vine* might be planted, is an intermingling of the thing signifying and that signified, wherein the note of the allegory as distinguished from the parable consists, as Quintilian (*Inst.* viii. 3. 77) observes; for having defined the allegory, he proceeds: 'In every parable either the similitude precedes and the matter itself follows, or the matter itself precedes, and the similitude follows; but meantime its two parts are kept free and distinct.' The allegory, then, is *trans*latio, the parable *col*latio.

[3] Of all this the *Pilgrim's Progress* affords ample illustration, 'Inter-

allegory stands to the metaphor, as the more elaborate and long drawn out composition of the same kind, in the same relation that the parable does to the isolated comparison or simile. And as many proverbs are concise parables, so also many are brief allegories. For instance, the following, which is an Eastern proverb—'This world is a carcass and they who gather round it are dogs,'—does in fact interpret itself as it goes along, and needs not, therefore, that an interpretation be brought to it from without; while it is otherwise with the proverb spoken by our Lord, 'Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together;'—this gives no help to its own interpretation from within, and is a saying, of which the darkness and difficulty have been abundantly witnessed by the many and diverging interpretations which it has received.

To sum up all, then, the parable differs from the fable, moving as it does in a spiritual world, and never violating the actual order of things natural—from the mythus, there being in the latter an unconscious blending of the deeper meaning with the outward symbol, while the two remain separate and separable in the parable—from the proverb, inasmuch as it is more fully carried out, and not accidentally and occasionally, but necessarily figurative—from the allegory, comparing as it does one thing *with* another, but, at the same time, maintaining their distinctness as an inner and an outer, and not transferring, as does the allegory, the properties and qualities and relations of one *to* the other.[1]

preter' appearing there as one of the persons of the allegory. Hallam (*Liter. of Europe*, vol. iv. p. 553) counts it a defect in the book, that, 'in his language, Bunyan sometimes mingles the signification too much with the fable; we might be perplexed between the imaginary and the real Christian;' but is not this of the very nature of the allegorical fable?

[1] On the whole subject dealt with in this chapter see Gerber, *Sprache als Kunst*, Bromberg, 1873, vol. ii. pp. 44, 109 sqq.

CHAPTER II.

ON TEACHING BY PARABLES.

However our Lord may on one or more occasions have made use of this manner of teaching by parables, with the intention of withdrawing from certain of his hearers the knowledge of truths, which they were unworthy or unfit to receive;[1] so that, in Fuller's words, the parables on such occasions were 'not unlike the pillar of cloud and fire, which gave light to

[1] Macrobius (*Somn. Scip.* i. 2): 'By figures which defended his secret meaning from the base.' No one can deny that this was sometimes the Lord's purpose, without doing great violence to his words (Matt. xiii. 10–15; Mark iv. 11, 12; Luke viii. 9, 10; cf. Ezek. xx. 49). And even if we could successfully deal with the ἵνα and the μήποτε there, still the passage of Isaiah (vi. 10) is in the way. Where would then be the fulfilment of his prophecy? There can be no doubt that the prophet speaks of a *penal* blindness, a punishment of the foregoing sins of his people, and namely this punishment, that they should be unable to recognize what was divine in his mission and character; which prophecy had its crowning fulfilment, when the Jewish people were so darkened by previous carnal thoughts and works, that they could see no glory and no beauty in Christ, could recognize nothing of divine in the teaching or person of Him who was 'God manifest in the flesh.' It is not that by the command, 'Make the heart of this people fat,' we need understand that any peculiar hardening then passed upon them; but that the Lord, having constituted as the righteous law of his moral government, that sin should produce darkness of heart and moral insensibility, declared that He would allow the law in their case to take its course, and so also with this latter generation: even as that law is declared in the latter half of Rom. i. to have taken its course with the Gentile world: in Augustine's awful words, 'God the only great, who by his ceaseless law casts penal blindness over unlawful lusts.' The fearful curse of sin is

the Israelites, but was a cloud of darkness to the Egyptians;[1] yet we may assume as certain that his general aim[2] was not different from that of others who have used this method of teaching, and who have desired thereby to make clearer,[3] either to illustrate or to prove the truths which they had in hand:—I say either to illustrate or to prove; for the parable or other analogy to spiritual truth appropriated from the

that it ever reproduces itself, that he who sows in sin reaps in spiritual darkness, which delivers him over again to worse sin:

> 'For when we in our viciousness grow hard,
> Oh, misery on't, the wise gods seel our eyes,
> In our own filth drop our clear judgments, make us
> Adore our errors, laugh at us, while we strut
> To our confusion.'

[1] *Pisgah Sight of Palestine*, p. 148.

[2] Bacon has noted this double purpose of parables (*De Sap. Vet.*): 'Among men a twofold usage of parables has been discovered and has grown into fashion, so that, what is still more remarkable, they are applied to opposite purposes. For parables are serviceable as a mask and veil, and also for elucidation and illustration.' Cf. *De Augm. Scient.* ii. 13; and the passage from Stobæus, on the teaching of Pythagoras, in Potter's edit. of Clement of Alexandria, p. 676, note.

[3] This has been acknowledged on all sides, equally by profane and sacred writers; thus Quintilian (*Inst.* viii. 3. 72): 'Similitudes are an admirable invention for throwing light on a subject.' And Seneca (*Ep.* 59) styles them, 'the props which help our weakness.' Again, they have been called 'mediators between knowledge and ignorance.' The author of the treatise *ad Herennium*: 'A similitude is used for the sake either of ornament, or of proof, or of clearness in teaching, or of bringing something before our eyes.' Tertullian (*De Res. Carn.* 33) expressly denies concerning parables that they darken the light of the Gospel (obumbrant Evangelii lucem). Basil calls the parable, a profitable discourse μετ' ἐπικρύψεως μετρίας, *i.e.* with that moderate degree of concealment which shall provoke, not such as shall repel or defeat, inquiry. The Lord, says Chrysostom (*Hom.* 69 *in Matth.*), spoke in parables, ἐρεθίζων καὶ διεγείρων, *i.e.* by way of rousing and exciting, or, as he expresses it elsewhere (*De Prec. Serm.* 2), that we might dive down into the deep sea of spiritual knowledge, from thence to fetch up pearls and precious stones; see too the quotation from him in Suicer, *Thes.* s. v. And Jeremy Taylor: 'He taught them by parables, under which were hid mysterious senses, which shined through their veil, like a bright sun through an eye closed with a thin eyelid.'

world of nature or man, is not merely illustration, but also in some sort proof. It is not merely that these analogies assist to make the truth intelligible, or, if intelligible before, present it more vividly to the mind, which is all that some will allow them.[1] Their power lies deeper than this, in the harmony unconsciously felt by all men, and which all deeper minds have delighted to trace, between the natural and spiritual worlds, so that analogies from the first are felt to be something more than illustrations, happily but yet arbitrarily chosen. They are arguments, and may be alleged as witnesses; the world of nature being throughout a witness for the world of spirit, proceeding from the same hand, growing out of the same root, and being constituted for that very end. All lovers of truth readily acknowledge these mysterious harmonies, and the force of arguments derived from them.[2] To them the things on earth are copies of the things in heaven. They know that the earthly tabernacle is made after the pattern of things seen in the Mount (Exod. xxv. 40; 1 Chron. xxviii. 11, 12);[3] and the question suggested by the angel in Milton is often forced upon their meditations,—

> 'What if earth
> Be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein
> Each to other like, more than on earth is thought?'[4]

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[1] So Stellini: 'As a rule we are so formed as to confuse the proof of an idea with the vividness of the impression which it makes, and to think that we have a clearer understanding of the things by which our power of imagination has been more keenly struck: those things also which are commended to us by their novelty, take firmer hold of us and so abide long in our memory, and do not grow old with any length of time.' And Spanheim (*Dub. Evang.* vol. ii. p. 497), though he does not urge this side exclusively: 'They have their use,' he says, 'from the impulse they give to the moods of our mind: for parables bring not only greater light, but also stronger emotion.'

[2] It is from this point of view that Eustathius gives his definition: 'A parable is a discourse inculcating and lending credibility to the subject by illustrations from common occurrences.'

[3] See Irenæus, *Con. Hær.* iv. 14. 3.

[4] Many are the sayings of a like kind among the Jewish Cabbalists. Thus in the book *Sohar*: 'Whatsoever is on earth, that also is in heaven

For it is an entire misunderstanding of the matter to regard these as happily, but arbitrarily, chosen illustrations, skilfully selected out of the great stock and storehouse of unappropriated images; from whence the same skill might have selected others as good, or nearly as good. Rather they belong to one another, the type and the thing typified, by an inward necessity; they were linked together long before by the law of a secret affinity.[1] It is not a happy accident which has yielded so wondrous an analogy as that of husband and wife, to set forth the mystery of Christ's relation to his Church (Ephes. v. 23–32). There is far more in it than this: the earthly relation is indeed but a lower form of the heavenly, on which it rests, and of which it is the utterance. When Christ spoke to Nicodemus of a new birth (John iii.), it was not merely because birth into this natural world was the most suitable figure that could be found to express that spiritual act which, without any power of our own, is accomplished upon us when we are brought into God's kingdom; but all the circumstances of this natural

and there is nothing so insignificant in the world that it does not correspond to something similar which is in heaven.' In Gfrörer's *Urchristenthum*, vol. ii. pp. 26–30, and Bähr's *Symb. d. Mos. Cult.* vol. i. p. 109, many like passages are quoted. No one was fuller of this than Tertullian: see his magnificent words on the resurrection (*De Res. Carn.* 12): 'All things here,' he says, 'are witnesses of a resurrection, all things in nature are prophetic outlines of divine operations, God not merely *speaking* parables, but doing them' (talia divinarum virium lineamenta, non minus parabolis operato Deo quam locuto). And again, *De Animâ*, 43, the activity of the soul in sleep is for him at once an argument and an illustration which God has provided us, of its not being tied to the body, to perish with it: 'God stretches out a hand to faith, which has to be helped in the easier form of similitudes and parables, not only of words, but also of things.'

[1] Out of a true sense of this has grown our use of the word *likely*. There is a confident expectation in the minds of men of the reappearance, in higher spheres, of the same laws and relations which they have recognized in lower; and thus that which is *like* is also *likely* or probable. Butler's *Analogy* is just the unfolding, as he himself declares at the beginning, in one particular line of this our consciousness that the *like* is also the *likely*.

birth had been preordained to bear the burden of so great a mystery. The Lord is King, not borrowing this title from the kings of the earth, but having lent his own title to them —and not the name only, but having so ordered, that all true rule and government upon earth, with its righteous laws, its stable ordinances, its punishment and its grace, its majesty and its terror, should tell of Him, and of his kingdom which ruleth over all—so that 'kingdom of God' is not a figurative expression, but most literal: it is rather the earthly kingdoms and the earthly kings that are figures and shadows of the true. And as with the world of man and human relations, so also is it with the world of nature. The untended soil which yields thorns and briers as its natural harvest is a permanent type and enduring parable of man's heart, which has been submitted to the same curse, and without a watchful spiritual husbandry will as surely put forth *its* briers and *its* thorns. The weeds that *will* mingle during the time of growth with the corn, and yet are separated from it at the last, tell every one and the same tale of the present admixture, and future sundering, of the righteous and the wicked. The decaying of the slight unsightly seed in the earth, and the rising up, out of that decay and death, of the graceful stalk and the fruitful ear, contain evermore the prophecy of the final resurrection; even as this is itself in its kind a resurrection,—the same process at a lower stage,—the same power putting itself forth upon meaner things (1 Cor. xv. 35–38). Of all such correspondences, as drawn out in Scripture, we ought not to say that they are finely chosen similitudes, but rather rightly appropriated types.

Doubtless it will be always possible for those who shrink from contemplating a higher world-order than that imperfect one around them,—and this, because the thought of such would rebuke their own imperfection and littleness,—who shrink too from a witness for God so near them as even that imperfect order would render, to deny this conclusion. It will be possible for them to reply that it is not as we affirm;

but that our talk of heavenly things is only a transferring of earthly images and relations to them;—that earth is not a shadow of heaven, but heaven, such at least as we conceive it, a dream of earth; that the names Father and Son for instance (and this is Arianism) are only *improperly* used, and in a secondary sense, when applied to Divine Persons, and then are terms so encumbered with difficulties and contradictions that they had better not be used at all; that we do not find and recognize heavenly things in their earthly counterparts, but only dexterously adapt them. This denial will be always possible, and has a deeper root than that it can be met with argument; yet the lover of a truth which shall be loftier than himself will not be moved from his faith that however man may be the measure of all things here, yet God is the measure of man,—that the same Lord who sits upon his throne in heaven, does with the skirts of his train fill his temple upon earth,—that these characters of nature which everywhere meet the eye are not a common but a sacred writing,—that they are hieroglyphics of God: and he counts this his blessedness, that having these round about him, he is therefore never without admonishment and teaching.

For such is in truth the condition of man. Around him is a sensuous world, yet one which need not bring him into bondage to his senses, being so framed as, if he will use it aright, continually to lift him above itself—a visible world to make known the invisible things of God, a ladder leading him up to the contemplation of heavenly truth. And this truth he shall encounter and make his own, not in fleeing from his fellows and their works and ways, but in the mart, on the wayside, in the field—not by stripping himself bare of all relations, but rather by the recognizing of these as instruments by which he is to be educated into the knowledge of higher mysteries; and therefore dealing with them in reverence, seeking by faithfulness to them in their lower forms to enter into their yet deeper significance—entertaining them, though they seem but common guests, and finding

that he has unawares entertained angels. And thus, besides his revelation in words, God has another and an elder, and one, indeed, without which it is inconceivable how that other could be made, for from this it appropriates all its signs of communication. This entire moral and visible world from first to last, with its kings and its subjects, its parents and its children, its sun and its moon, its sowing and its harvest, its light and its darkness, its sleeping and its waking, its birth and its death, is from beginning to end a mighty parable, a great teaching of supersensuous truth, a help at once to our faith and to our understanding.[1]

It is true that men are ever in danger of losing 'the key of knowledge,' which should open to them the portals of this palace: and then, instead of a prince in a world of wonder that is serving him, man moves in the midst of this world, alternately its taskmaster and its drudge. Such we see him to become at the two poles of savage and falsely cultivated life —his inner eye darkened, so that he sees nothing, his inner ear heavy, so that there come no voices from nature unto him: and indeed in all, save only in the one Man, there is more or less of the dulled ear, and the filmed eye. There is none to whom nature tells out all that she has to tell, and as constantly as she would be willing to tell it. Now the whole of Scripture, with its ever-recurring use of figurative language, is a re-awakening of man to the mystery of nature, a giving back to him of 'the key of knowledge,' of the true *signatura rerum*: and this comes out, as we might expect, in its highest form, but by no means exclusively, in those which by pre-eminence we call the parables. They have this point of likeness with the miracles, that those, too, were a calling of heed

[1] Abelard's are striking words (*Introd. ad Theol.* ii. 2): 'God takes so much delight in his handiwork that oftentimes He chooses to be figured in the natures of the things which He created, rather than to be expressed in words of human imagination and invention, and is more pleased by the natural similitude of things than by any fitness in human language; and so also the Scripture as regards beauty of eloquence prefers to use the actual natures of things according to some similitude rather than to follow out a strict description in its fulness.'

to powers that were daily working, but which, by their continual and orderly repetition, which ought to have kindled the more admiration, had become *wonder*-works no more, had lost the power of exciting admiration or even attention, until men had need to be startled anew to the contemplation of the energies which were ever working among them.[1] In like manner the parables are a calling of attention to the spiritual facts which underlie all processes of nature, all institutions of human society, and which, though unseen, are the true ground and support of all. Christ moved in the midst of what seemed to the eye of sense an old and worn-out world, and it evidently became new at his touch; for it told to man *now* the inmost secrets of his being, answered with strange and marvellous correspondences to another world within him, helped to the birth great thoughts of his heart, which before were helplessly struggling to be born,—these two worlds, without him and within, each throwing a light and a glory on the other. For on this rests the possibility of a real teaching by parables, such as, resting upon a substantial ground, shall not be a mere building on the air, or painting upon a cloud,—on this, namely, that the world around us is a *divine* world, that it is God's world, the world of the same God who is leading us into spiritual truth; that the ghastly dream of Gnostic and Manichæan, who would set a great gulf between the worlds of nature and of grace, ascribing this to a good, but that to an imperfect or an evil power, is a lie; and that, being originally God's world, it is therefore a sharer in his redemption.

And yet this redeemed world, like man, is in part redeemed only in hope (Rom. viii. 20); being in no present possession, but only in the assured certainty, of a complete deliverance. For this, too, we must not forget, that nature, in its present state, like man himself, contains but a prophecy of its coming glory; it 'groaneth and travaileth;' it cannot tell out all its secrets; it has a presentiment of something, which it is not yet, but hereafter shall be. It, too, is suffering under our

[1] See my *Notes on the Miracles*, 11th edit. p. 9, sqq.

curse: yet thus in its very imperfection wonderfully serving us, since thus it has apter signs and symbols to declare to us our disease and our misery, and the processes of their healing and removing; it has symbols not merely of God's grace and power, but also of man's sins and wretchedness. It has its sores and its wounds, its storms and its wildernesses, its lion and its adder, by these interpreting to us death and all that leads to death, no less than, by its more beneficent workings, life and all that tends to the restoring and maintaining of life.

But while thus it has this gracious adaptation to our needs, not the less does it, in this fallen estate, come short of its full purpose and meaning: it fails in part to witness for a divine order, *tantâ stat prædita culpâ*,— as one, whose eye was mainly directed to this its disorder and deficiency, exclaimed. It does not give always a clear witness, nor speak out in distinct accents, of God's truth and love. Of these it is oftentimes an inadequate expression—yea, sometimes seems not to declare them at all, but rather in volcano and in earthquake, in ravenous beasts and in poisonous herbs, to tell of strife, and discord, and disharmony, and all the woful consequences of the Fall. But one day it will be otherwise; one day it will be translucent with the divine idea which it embodies, and which even now, despite these dark spots, shines through it so wondrously. For no doubt the end and consummation will be, not the abolition of this nature, but the glorifying of it; that which is now nature (*natura*), always, as the word expresses, striving and struggling to the birth, will then be indeed born. The new creation will be as the glorious child born out of the world-long throes and anguish of the old. It will be as the snake casting its wrinkled and winter skin; not the world, but '*the fashion* of the world,' passing away, when it puts off its soiled work-day garments, and puts on its holiday apparel for the great Sabbath which shall arrive at last. Then, when it too shall have been delivered from its bondage of corruption, all that it now has of dim and contradictory and perplexing shall disappear. This nature, too, shall be a mirror in which God will perfectly glass Himself, for it shall

tell of nothing but the marvels of his wisdom and power and love.

But at present, while this natural world, through its share in man's fall, has won in fitness for the expression of the sadder side of man's condition, the imperfection and evil that cling to him and beset him, it has in some measure lost in fitness for the expressing of the higher. It possesses the best, yet oftentimes inadequate, helps for this. These human relationships, and this whole constitution of things earthly, share in the shortcoming that cleaves to all which is of the earth. Obnoxious to change, tainted with sin, shut in within brief limits by decay and death, they are often weak and temporary, where they have to set forth things strong and eternal. A sinful element is evidently mingled with them, while they yet appear as symbols of what is entirely pure and heavenly. They break down under the weight that is laid upon them. The father chastens after his own pleasure, instead of wholly for the child's profit; in this unlike that heavenly Father, whose character he is to declare. The seed which should set forth the Word of God, that Word which liveth and abideth for ever, itself decays and perishes at last. Festivals, so frequently the image of the pure joy of the kingdom, of the crowning communion of the faithful with their Lord and with one another, will often, when here celebrated, be mixed up with much that is carnal, and they come to their close in a few hours. There is something exactly analogous to all this in the typical or parabolical personages of Scripture—the men that are to set forth the Divine Man. Through their sins, through their infirmities—yea, through the necessary limitations of their earthly condition, they are unable to carry the correspondences completely out. Sooner or later they break down; and very often even the part which they do sustain, they sustain it not for long. Thus few would deny the typical character of Solomon. His kingdom of peace, the splendour of his court, his wisdom, the temple which he reared, all point to a Greater whom he foreshadowed and foreshowed. Yet this gorgeous forecasting of the coming glory is vouchsafed to

us only for an instant; we catch a glimpse of it and no more. Even before his reign is done, all is beginning to dislimn again, to lose the distinctness of its outline, the brightness of its colouring. His wisdom is darkened, the perfect peace of his land has disappeared (1 Kin. xi. 14, 23, 26); and the gloom on every side encroaching warns us that this is but a fleeting image, not the very substance, of the true kingdom of peace.

Again, there are men who only in some single point of their history are brought into typical relation with Christ: such was Jonah, the type of the Resurrection; others, again, whose lives at one moment and another seem suddenly to stand out as symbolic, but who then sink back so far that we hesitate whether we may dare to consider them as such at all, and with whom the attempt to carry out the resemblance into greater detail would involve in infinite embarrassment. Samson will at once suggest himself as one of these. Doubtless something more was meant than is contained in the letter, when he out of the eater brought forth meat, and out of the strong, sweetness (Judg. xiv. 14); or when he wrought a mightier deliverance for Israel through his death than he had wrought in his life (Judg. xvi. 30). Yet we hesitate how far we may proceed. And so it is in every case, for somewhere or other every man is a liar; he is false, that is, to the divine idea, which he was meant to embody, and fails to bring it out in all its fulness and perfection. So that of the truths of God in the language of men (this language of course including man's acts as well as his words), of these sons of heaven married to the daughters of earth, it may truly be said, 'we have this treasure in earthen vessels.' And we must expect that somewhere or other the earthen vessel will appear, that the imperfection which cleaves to our forms of utterance, to men's words and to their works, will make itself felt either in the misapprehensions of those to whom the language is addressed (as at John iii. 4), or by the language itself, though the best that human speech could supply, by the men themselves, though the noblest, it may be, of their age and nation,

—yet failing to set forth the divine truth in all its fulness and completeness.[1]

No doubt it was a feeling, working more or less consciously, of the dangers and drawbacks that attend all our means of communication—a desire, also, to see eye to eye, or, as St. Paul terms it, face to face[2] (1 Cor. xiii. 12), which caused the

[1] It is now rather 'in part,' 'darkly,' or 'in a riddle,' 'through a glass' (1 Cor. xiii. 9, 12), in proverbs (John xvi. 25); cf. Bernard, *In Cant. Serm.* xxxi. 8. A Persian mystical poet has finely expressed this truth:

> Sense-world of spirit-world is as a shadow
> And draws from it its sustenance. Our feelings
> Are like imprisoned monarchs, and lie hid
> In verbal dungeons. When the Eternal enters
> The wise man's heart, then must he straightway soar
> To understanding, and with shadow-pictures
> His visitant interpret. Yet is the image
> Still incomplete: knowledge of self alone
> Can truly profit. This once gained, thou drawest
> From every picture its true consequences;
> But here must much forego, which the Hereafter
> Shall see supplied.

Translated from Tholuck, *Blüthensamml. aus d. Morgenl. Mystik*, p. 216.

[2] John Smith (*Select Disc.* p. 159) observes that the later Platonists had three terms to distinguish the different degrees of divine knowledge, κατ' ἐπιστήμην, κατὰ νόησιν, and κατὰ παρουσίαν. If we assumed these into Christian theology,—and they very nearly agree with the threefold division of St. Bernard (*De Consid.* v. 3), opinio, fides, and intellectus (intuition),—we might say of the first, that it is common to all men, being merely notional, knowing about God: the second is the privilege of the faithful now, the knowing God: the third, the αὐτοφάνεια of the same school, the Arcanum facierum of the Jewish doctors, will be their possession in the world to come, that seeing of God, the reciprocity of which is finely indicated by Augustine, when he terms it, Videre Videntem. It was this, according to Jewish interpreters, which Moses craved, when he said, 'I beseech thee, shew me thy glory,' but which was denied him, as being impossible for man in this present life: 'Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live' (Exod. xxxiii. 18–20). Yet he, too, they say, came nearer to this than any other of the Lord's prophets (see Meuschen, *N. T. ex. Talm. illustr.* p. 373). In a striking Mohammedan tradition, the Lord convinces Moses how fearful a thing it would be to comply with his request, 'Show me thy glory,'—

Mystics to press with such earnestness and frequency, that we should seek to abstract ourselves from all images of things, that to raise ourselves to the contemplation of pure and naked truth is the height of spiritual attainment, towards which we should continually be struggling.[1] But in requiring this as a test and proof of spiritual progress—in setting it as the mark towards which men should strive, they were not merely laying unnecessary burdens on men's backs, but actually leading astray. For whether one shall separate in his own consciousness the form from the essence,—whether the images which he uses shall be to him more or less conscious symbols,—does not depend on his greater or less advance in spiritual knowledge, but on causes which may or may not accompany religious growth, and mainly on this one,—whether he has been accustomed to think upon his thoughts, to reflect upon the wonderful instrument which in language he is using. One who possesses the truth only as it is incorporated in the symbol, may have a far stronger hold upon it, may be influenced by it far more mightily, may far more really be nourished by it than another, who, according to the mystic view, would be in a higher and more advanced state. It is true, indeed, that for them who have not merely to live upon the truth themselves, but to guard it for others,—not only to drink themselves of the streams of divine knowledge, but to see that the waters of its well-heads be not troubled for their brethren,—for them it is well that they should be conscious, and the more conscious the better, of the marvellous thing which language is,—of the power and mystery, of the truth and falsehood, of words; and as a part of this acquaintance, that the truth, and that which is the vehicle of the truth, should for them be separable; but then it should be even for them as soul and body, not as kernel and husk. This last comparison

by suffering a spark of that glory, the fulness of which Moses had craved to see, to fall upon a mountain, which instantly burst into a thousand fragments.

[1] Thauler, for instance, is continually urging, 'That we strip and divest ourselves of all images,'—Fénelon the same; and, indeed, all the Mystics, from Dionysius downward, agree in this.

has been often used, but may easily be pushed into an error. It has been said that, as when the seed is cast into the ground, after a time the kernel disengages itself from the outer coating, and alone remains and fructifies, while the husk decays and perishes; so in the seed of God's word, deposited in man's heart, the sensible form must fall off, that the inner germ, releasing itself, may germinate. But the image, urged thus far, does not aptly set forth the truth; it will lead in the end to a perilous slighting of the written word, under pretence of having the inner life. The outer covering is not to fall off and perish, but to become glorified, being pierced and penetrated by the spirit that is within. Man is body and soul, and, being so, the truth has for him need of a body and soul likewise; it is well that he should know what is body, and what is soul, but not that he should seek to kill the body, that he may get at the soul.

Thus it was provided for us by a wisdom higher than our own, and all our attempts to disengage ourselves wholly from sensuous images must always in the end prove unsuccessful. It will be only a changing of our images, and that for the worse, a giving up of living realities which truly stir the heart, and a getting of dead metaphysical abstractions in their room. The aim of the teacher who would find his way to the hearts and understandings of his hearers, will never be to keep down the parabolical element in his teaching, but rather to make as large use of it as he can. To do this effectually will demand a fresh effort of his own; for while all language is, and must be figurative, yet long familiar use is continually wearing out the freshness and sharpness of the stamp—(who, for example, that speaks of *insulting*, retains the lively image of a leaping on the prostrate body of a foe?); so that language is ever needing to be recalled, minted and issued anew, cast into novel forms, as was done by Him of whom it is said, that without a parable spake He nothing; He gave no doctrine in an abstract form, no skeletons of truth, but all clothed, as it were, with flesh and blood. He did, as He declared his Apostles must do, if they would be

scribes instructed unto the kingdom, and able to instruct others (Matt. xiii. 52); He brought forth out of his treasure things new and old; by the help of the old He made intelligible the new; by the aid of the familiar He introduced that which was strange; from the known He passed more easily to the unknown. And in his own manner of teaching He has given us the secret of all effectual teaching, of all speaking which shall leave, as was said of the eloquence of Pericles,[1] stings in the minds and memories of the hearers. There is a natural delight[2] in this manner of teaching, appealing, as it does, not to the understanding only, but to the feelings, to the imagination; calling the whole man, with all his powers and faculties, into pleasurable activity: and things thus learned with delight are those longest remembered.[3]

Had our Lord spoken naked spiritual truth, how many of his words, partly from his hearers' lack of interest in them, partly from their lack of insight, would have passed away from their hearts and memories, and left no trace behind them.[4] But being imparted to them in this form, under some lively image, in some short and perhaps seemingly paradoxical sentence, or in some brief but interesting narrative, they aroused attention, excited inquiry, and even if the truth did not at the moment, by the help of the illustration used, find

[1] Cicero, *De Orat.* iii. 34.

[2] This delight has left its mark upon our language itself. To *like* a thing is to compare it with some other thing which we have already before our natural, or our mind's eye; and the pleasurable emotion always arising from this act of comparison has caused us to give the word a wider sense than belonged to it at first. That we *like* what is *like*, is the explanation of the pleasure which rhyme gives us. For the connexion between *leikan* and *leiks* see Dieffenbach, *Goth. Sprache*, vol. ii. pp. 133, 134.

[3] Thus Jerome (*Comm. in Matt.* in loc.): 'In order that what the hearers cannot retain if it be presented to them as a bare precept, may be retained by means of similitude and examples.'

[4] It was, no doubt, from a deep feeling of this that the Jewish Cabbalists affirmed, 'The heavenly light never descends without a veil;' with which agrees the saying of the pseudo-Dionysius, so often quoted by the Schoolmen, 'It is impossible that the Divine ray can shine upon us unless it be shrouded with a diversity of sacred coverings.'

an entrance into the mind, yet the words must thus often have fixed themselves in their memories and remained by them.[1] And here the comparison of the seed is appropriate, of which the shell should guard the life of the inner germ, till that should be ready to unfold itself, till there should be a soil prepared for it, in which it could take root and find nourishment suitable to its needs. His words, laid up in the memory, were to many that heard Him like the money of another country, unavailable for present use,—the value of which they only dimly knew, but which yet was ready in their hand when they reached that land, and were naturalized in it. When the Spirit came, and brought all things to their remembrance, then He filled all the outlines of truth which they before possessed with its substance, quickened all its forms with the power and spirit of life. Not perhaps at once, but gradually, the meanings of what they had heard unfolded themselves to them. Small to the small, they grew with their growth. And thus must it ever be with all true knowledge, which is not the communication of information, the transfer of a dead sum or capital of facts or theories from one mind to another, but the opening of living fountains within the heart, the scattering of sparks which shall kindle where they fall, the planting of seeds of truth, which shall take root in the new soil where they are cast, and striking their roots downward, and sending their branches upward, shall grow up into goodly trees.

Nor must we forget, when we are estimating the amount of the parabolic element in Scripture, how much besides the spoken, there is there of acted, parable. In addition to those parables which, by a more especial right, we separate off, and call by that name, every type is a *real* parable. The whole Levitical constitution, with its outer court, its Holy, its Holiest of all, its High priest, its sacrifices, and all its ordinances, is such, and is declared to be such, in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ix. 9). The wanderings of the children of

[1] Bernard: 'Is it not well to hold in its veiled form that which thou canst not receive in its nakedness?'

Israel have ever been regarded as a parable of the spiritual life. In like manner we have parabolic persons, who teach us not merely by what in their own characters they did, but as they represented One higher and greater; men whose actions and whose sufferings obtain a new significance, inasmuch as they were in these drawing lines, though often quite unaware of it themselves, which Another and a greater should hereafter fill up; as Abraham when he cast out the bond-woman and her son (Gal. iv. 30), Jonah in the whale's belly, David in his hour of peril or of agony (Ps. xxii.) And in narrower circles, without touching on the central fact and Person in the kingdom of God, how often has He chosen that his servants should teach by an acted parable rather than by any other means, and this because no other teaching was fitted to make so deep and so lasting an impression. Jeremiah breaks in pieces a potter's vessel, that he may foretell the complete destruction of his people (xix. 1–11); he wears a yoke, himself a prophecy and a parable of their approaching bondage (xxvii. 2; xxviii. 10); he redeems a field, in pledge of a redemption in store for all the land (xxxii. 6–15); and these examples might be infinitely multiplied. And as God will have his servants by these signs to teach others, He continually teaches *them* by the same. It is not his word only that comes to his prophets, but the great truths of his kingdom pass before their eyes incorporated in symbols, addressing themselves first to the spiritual eye, and only through that to the spiritual ear. They are eminently *Seers*. Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah will at once suggest themselves, as those of whom, more than, perhaps, any others, this was true. And in the New Tèstament we have a great example of the same teaching in St. Peter's vision (Acts x. 9–16), and in all the visions of the Apocalypse. Nay, we might venture to affirm that so it was with the highest and greatest truth of all, that which includes all others—the manifestation of God in the flesh. This, inasmuch as it was a making intelligible of the otherwise unintelligible; a making visible of the invisible; a teaching, not by doctrine, but by the embodied doctrine

of a divine life, was the highest and most glorious of all parables.[1]

It would be an interesting study to trace the distinctive character of the several Gospels in the parables which they severally record; or, when the parables are common to more than one, in the especial circumstances which they bring prominently out. Here, indeed, only St. Matthew and St. Luke will come into comparison, St. John having allegories, as of the Good Shepherd, the True Vine, but no parables; while St. Mark has only one parable peculiarly his own (iv. 26), and in his record of those which he shares with the other two, presents no very distinctive features. We may say generally of the parables, thus compared, that St. Matthew's are more theocratic; St. Luke's, more ethical; St. Matthew's are more parables of judgment—St. Luke's, of mercy; those are statelier, these tenderer. St. Matthew's are frequently introduced as containing mysteries of the kingdom of God, language which nowhere occurs in St. Luke. In St. Matthew's God evermore appears as the King who, sitting on his throne, scattereth away all evil with his eyes, and has in readiness to avenge all disobedience of men; many of them concluding with distinct judgment acts of a greater or a lesser severity (xiii. 42, 49; xviii. 34; xx. 14; xxi. 41; xxii. 7, 13; xxv. 12, 30). Such judgment acts are not wanting in the parables of St. Luke, but less frequently occur; while mercy supplies to them their ground-tone, as it does to the whole Gospel whereunto they belong. They are of the tree which was spared at the gardener's intercession (xiii. 6); of the Samaritan who poured oil and wine into the traveller's wounds (x. 30); of the father who welcomed back his penitent son (xv. 11); nay, even the parable of Dives and Lazarus is a parable of mercy, for it is the declaration of what the issues of *not* showing mercy will be.

[1] See a few words on this in the *Epistle of Barnabas*, 5, and in Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 6, Potter's ed. p. 803): 'For the character of the Scriptures is naturally parabolical, because the Lord also, Who was not of the world, came unto men in the guise of the world.'

Nowhere do the characteristic differences of the two Evangelists come out more strikingly than where they record parables, whose features in many respects resemble one another. Thus compare St. Matthew's parable of the Marriage of the King's Son (xxii. 1) with St. Luke's of the Great Supper (xiv. 16). These are not, as I hope by and by to show, two different versions or reports of the same parable, but separate parables, akin to, but yet distinct from, one another. As nothing is so ductile as fine gold, so was it with the fine gold of the Saviour's doctrine; which yielded itself easily to be fashioned and shaped into new forms, as need might require; the Evangelists severally giving prominence to that aspect of the parable which corresponded most to their own spiritual predispositions, which consented best with the special purpose of their Gospel. The parable in St. Matthew is of a king, and a king's son, for whom a marriage-festival is made. All is here of the theocracy; roots itself in the hopes which the Old Testament cherishes, in the promises with which it abounds. And then, how characteristic of this Evangelist is the double doom—first, of the open foe, and then of the false friend! In St. Luke all is different, and all characteristic. No longer a king, but simply a certain man, makes a supper; the two judgment acts fall into the background; one indeed disappears altogether; while far more is made of the grace and goodness of the giver of the feast, which lead him again and again to send forth his servant that he may gather in the meanest, the most despised, the most outcast, to his table. These are but slight hints on a matter which each student of the parables may profitably follow out for himself.[1]

[1] In addition to our recorded parables, Papias, a hearer of St. John, professed to have received by tradition certain other parables of our Lord's (ξένας παραβολάς, Eusebius *H. E.* iii. 39, calls them), which he recorded in his lost book, *An Account of the Lord's Sayings*.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE INTERPRETATION OF PARABLES.

The parables, fair in their outward form, are yet fairer within, 'apples of gold in network of silver;' each one of them like a casket, itself of exquisite workmanship, but in which jewels yet richer than itself are laid up; or as fruit, which, however lovely to look upon, is yet in its inner sweetness more delectable still.[1] To find, then, the golden key for this casket, at whose touch it shall reveal its treasures; so to open this fruit, that nothing of its hidden kernel shall be missed or lost, has naturally been regarded ever as a matter of high concern.[2] In this, the interpretation of the parable, a subject to which we have now arrived, there is one question of more importance than any other—one so constantly presenting itself anew, that it will naturally claim to be the first and most fully considered. It is this, How much of them is to be taken as significant? and to this question answers the most different have been returned. There are those who lay themselves out for the tracing a general correspondence between the sign and the thing signified, and this having done refuse to advance any further; while others aim at running out the interpretation into the minutest details; with those who occupy every inter-

[1] Bernard: 'The very surface, if considered only from without, is beautiful indeed; and whoso cracks the nut will find in it a kernel still pleasanter and far more delightful.'

[2] Jerome (*In Eccles.*): 'The marrow of a parable is different from the promise of its surface, and like as gold is sought for in the earth, the kernel in a nut, and the hidden fruit in the prickly covering of chestnuts, so in parables we must search more deeply after the divine meaning.

mediate stage between these extremes. Some have gone far in saying, This is merely drapery and ornament, and not the vehicle of essential truth; this was introduced either to give liveliness and a general air of verisimilitude to the narrative, or as actually necessary to make the story, the vehicle of the truth, a consistent whole, without which consistency the hearer would have been perplexed or offended; or else to hold together and connect the different parts,—just as in the most splendid house there must be passages, not for their own sake, but to lead from one room to another.[1] They have used often the illustration of the knife, which is not all edge; of the harp, which is not all strings; urging that much in the knife, which does not cut, the handle for example, is yet of prime necessity,—much, in the musical instrument, which is never intended to give sound, must yet not be wanting: or, to use another comparison, that many circumstances 'in Christ's parables are like the feathers which wing our arrows, which, though they pierce not like the head, but seem slight things and of a different matter from the rest, are yet requisite to make the shaft to pierce, and do both convey it to and penetrate the mark.'[2] To this school Chrysostom belongs. He

[1] Tertullian (*De Pudicitiâ*, 9): 'Wherefore an hundred sheep? and why precisely ten pieces of silver? and what is the meaning of the broom? It was necessary, I answer, for the purpose of showing that the salvation of one sinner is most pleasing to God, to name some number out of which to describe one as lost: so, too, it was necessary to furnish the picture of the woman searching her house for the piece of silver, with the accessories of broom and candle. Anxious pryings of this sort not only engender mistrust, but by the subtlety of their forced explanations generally divert men from the truth. There are details also which are simply inserted to build up, set forth and weave the parable, that men may be led to the point at which the illustration is aimed.' Brower (*De Par. J. C.* p. 175): 'Such details could not be omitted, inasmuch as only by their help could the matter be led easily to an issue, for without them there would be a break or gap in the narrative which would altogether injure the parallel; or, because the neglect of such points would perhaps invite the listeners to idle questionings and doubts.'

[2] Boyle, *Style of the Holy Scriptures: Fifth Objection.* Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, xvi. 2) carries out this view still further: 'Assuredly not everything which forms part of the story must be considered also to have

continually warns against pressing too anxiously all the circumstances of a parable, and often cuts his own interpretation somewhat short in language like this, 'Be not over-busy about the rest.' It is the same with the interpreters who habitually follow him, Theophylact [1] and others, though not always faithful to their own principles. So also with Origen, who illustrates his meaning by a comparison of much beauty: 'For as the likenesses which are given in pictures and statues are not perfect resemblances of those things for whose sake they are made—but for instance the image which is painted in wax on a plain surface of wood, contains a resemblance of the superficies and colours, but does not also preserve the depressions and prominences, but only a representation of

a significance; rather for the sake of the parts which have a significance those also which have no significance are inwoven with them. For the earth is broken up only by the ploughshare, but for this to be possible the other parts also of the plough are necessary. In harps and similar musical instruments only the strings are adapted for song, but that these may be so adapted there are present in the structure of the instruments all the other parts, which are not struck by the singer, but to which the parts which resound at his touch are united. So also in prophetic narrations, details are told us which have no significance, but to which the points which have significance adhere and are in a manner attached.' Cf. *Con. Faust.* xxii. 94. A Roman Catholic expositor, Salmeron, has a comparison something similar: 'Certain it is that a sword does not cleave with all its parts, but only with one: for it does not cut with the hilt, or with the flat, or with the point, but it cuts only with the edge. And yet no one in his senses would say that either hilt, flat or point were unnecessary to the cleaving: for although they do not cleave in themselves, yet they help the part which is sharp and naturally fitted for cutting, so that it is able to cleave the more strongly and conveniently. So also in parables many details are introduced, which, although they do not in themselves work any spiritual meaning, are yet helpful in enabling the parable to cleave and cut by means of that part which was appointed by the author for showing the desired lesson.'

[1] Theophylact (*In Luc.* 16): 'Every parable obliquely, and as in a figure, makes clear the nature of certain matters, without in every point corresponding to the matters for which it was taken. Therefore it does not behove us to be over-busy with minute consideration of all the parts of parables, but, making use of them as much as is suitable to the point before us, to let the rest go, as co-existing with the parable, but contributing nothing to the point.'

them—while a statue, again, seeks to preserve the likeness which consists in prominences and depressions, but not as well that which is in colours—but should the statue be of wax, it seeks to retain both, I mean the colours, and also the depressions and prominences, but is not an image of those things which are within—in the same manner, of the parables which are contained in the Gospels *so* account, that the kingdom of heaven, when it is likened to anything, is not likened to it according to *all* the things which are contained in that with which the comparison is instituted, but according to certain qualities which the matter in hand requires.'[1] Exactly thus Tillotson has said that the parable and its interpretation are not to be contemplated as two planes, touching one another at every point, but oftentimes rather as a plane and a globe, which, though brought into contact, yet touch each other only at one.

On the other hand, Augustine, though himself sometimes laying down the same canon, frequently extends the interpretation through all the branches and minutest fibres of the narrative;[2] and Origen no less, despite the passage which I have just quoted. And in modern times, the followers of Cocceius have been particularly earnest in affirming all parts of a parable to be significant.[3] There is a noble passage in the writings of Edward Irving, in which he describes the long and laborious care which he took to master the literal meaning of every word in the parables, being confident of the riches of inward truth which every one of those words contained; he goes on to say: 'Of all which my feeling and progress in studying the parables of our Lord, I have found no similitude worthy to convey the impression, save that of sailing through between the Pillars of Hercules into the Mediterranean Sea, where you have to pass between armed rocks, in a strait, and

[1] *Comm. in Matt.* xiii. 47.

[2] His exposition of the Prodigal Son (*Quæst. Evang.* ii. qu. 33) is a marvellous example of this.

[3] Teelman (*Comm. in Luc.* xvi. 34–52) defends this principle at length and with much ability.

under a current—all requiring careful and skilful seamanship —but, being passed, opening into such a large, expansive, and serene ocean of truth, so engirdled round with rich and fertile lands, so inlaid with beautiful and verdant islands, and full of rich colonies and populous cities, that unspeakable is the delight and the reward it yieldeth to the voyager.' [1] He and others have protested against that shallow spirit which is ever ready to empty Scripture of its deeper significance, to exclaim, 'This means nothing; this circumstance is not to be pressed;' which, satisfying itself with sayings like these, fails to draw out from the word of God all the rich treasures contained in it for us, or to recognize the manifold wisdom with which its type is often constructed to correspond with the antitype. They bid us to observe that of those who start with the principle of setting aside so much as non-essential, scarcely any two, when it comes to the application of their principle, are agreed concerning what actually is to be set aside; what one rejects, another retains, and the contrary: and further, that the more this scheme is carried out, the more the peculiar beauty of the parable disappears, and the interest of it is lost. For example, when Calvin will not allow the oil in the vessels of the wise Virgins (Matt. xxv. 4) to mean anything, nor the vessels themselves, nor the lamps; [2] or when Storr,[3] who, perhaps more than any other, would leave the parables bare trunks, stripped of all their foliage and branches, of everything that made for beauty and ornament, denies that the Prodigal leaving his father's house has any direct reference to man's departure from the presence of his heavenly Father, it is at once evident of how much not merely of pleasure, but of instruction, they would deprive us. It is urged, too, in opposition to this interpretation of the parables merely in the gross, that when our Lord Himself interpreted the two first

[1] *Sermons, Lectures, and Occasional Discourses*, 1828, vol. ii. p. 340.

[2] 'Some torment themselves greatly in the matter of the lamps, the vessels and the oil; but the main lesson is simple and natural, namely that eager zeal for a little time is not enough unless untiring perseverance is added to it.'

[3] *De Parabolis Christi*, in his *Opusc. Acad.* vol. i. p. 89.

which He delivered, namely, that of the Sower and of the Tares, He most probably intended to furnish us with a rule for the interpretation of all. These explanations, therefore, are most important, not merely for their own sakes, but as supplying principles and canons of interpretation to be applied throughout. Now, in these the moral application descends to some of the minutest details: thus, the birds which snatch away the seed sown, are explained as Satan who takes the good word out of the heart (Matt. xiii. 19), the thorns which choke the good seed correspond to the cares and pleasures of life (Matt. xiii. 22), with much more of the same kind.

On a review of the whole controversy it may safely be said, that there have been exaggerations upon both sides. The advocates of interpretation in the gross and not in detail have been too easily satisfied with their favourite maxim, 'Every comparison must halt somewhere;'[1] since one may fairly demand, 'Where is the necessity?' There is no force in the rejoinder, that unless it did so, it would not be an illustration of the thing, but the thing itself. Such is not the fact. Two lines do not cease to be two, nor become one and the same, because they run parallel through their whole course.[2] Doubtless in the opposite extreme of interpretation there lies the danger of an ingenious trifling with the word of God; a danger, too, lest the interpreter's delight in the exercise of this ingenuity, with the admiration of it on the part of others, may not put somewhat out of sight that the sanctification of the heart through the truth is the main purpose of all Scripture: even as we shall presently note the manner in which heretics, through this pressing of all parts of a parable to the uttermost, have been able to extort from it almost any meaning that they pleased.

After all has been urged on the one side and on the other, it must be confessed that no absolute rule can be laid down

[1] Omne simile claudicat.

[2] Theophylact (in Suicer, *Thes.* s. v. παραβολή): 'A parable, if it be maintained in all its points, is no longer a parable, but the very thing which occasions it.'

beforehand to guide the expositor how far he shall proceed. Much must be left to good sense, to spiritual tact, to that reverence for the word of God, which will show itself sometimes in refusing curiosities of interpretation, no less than at other times in demanding a distinct spiritual meaning for the words which are before it. The nearest approach, perhaps, to a canon of interpretation on the matter is that which Tholuck lays down :—'It must be allowed,' he says, 'that a similitude is perfect in proportion as it is on all sides rich in applications ;[1] and hence, in treating the parables of Christ, the expositor must proceed on the presumption that there is import in every single point, and only desist from seeking it when either it does not result without forcing, or when we can clearly show that this or that circumstance was merely added for the sake of giving intuitiveness to the narrative. We should not assume anything to be non-essential, except when by holding it fast as essential, the unity of the whole is marred and troubled.'[2] For, to follow up these words of

[1] Vitringa: 'I am best pleased with those interpreters who extract from the parables of the Lord Christ some fuller truth than a mere general moral precept, illustrated and more strongly fixed in the minds of his hearers by means of a parable. Not that I would have the hardihood to maintain that such a kind of teaching or persuasion, if it had pleased our Lord to employ it, would have been inconsistent with his high wisdom; but yet I contend that from wisdom at its highest, as was that of the Son of God, we may rightly expect something more. If, therefore, the parables of the Lord Christ can be so explained that their several parts may conveniently, and without violent contortions, be transferred to the economy of the Church, I hold that this kind of explanation should be embraced as the best, and be preferred to all others. For, if nothing stands in the way, the more solid truth we extract from the word of God, the more we shall commend the Divine wisdom.'

[2] Out of this feeling the Jewish doctors distinguished lower forms of revelation from higher, dreams from prophetic communications thus, that in the higher all was essential, while the dream ordinarily contained something that was superfluous; and they framed this axiom,—'As there is no corn without straw, so neither is there any mere dream without something that is ἀργόν, void of reality and insignificant.' Thus in Joseph's dream (Gen. xxxvii. 9), the moon could not have been well left out, when all the heavenly host did obeisance to him: yet this circumstance was thus ἀργόν, for his mother, who thereby was signified,

his,—in the same manner as a statue is the more perfect in the measure that the life, the idea that was in the sculptor's mind, breathes out of and looks through every feature and limb, so much the greater being the triumph of spirit, penetrating through and glorifying the matter which it has assumed; so the more translucent a parable is in all parts with the divine truth which it embodies, the more the garment with which that is arrayed, is a garment of light, pierced through, as was once the raiment of Christ, with the brightness within—illuminating it in all its recesses and corners, and leaving no dark place in it—by so much the more beautiful and perfect it must be esteemed.

It will much help us in this determining of what is essential and what not, if, before we attempt to explain the particular parts, we obtain a firm grasp of the central truth which the parable would set forth, and distinguish it in the mind as sharply and accurately as we can from all cognate truths which border upon it; for only seen from that middle point will the different parts appear in their true light. 'One may compare,' says a late writer on the parables,[1] 'the entire parable with a circle, of which the middle point is the spiritual truth or doctrine, and of which the radii are the several circumstances of the narration; so long as one has not placed oneself in the centre, neither the circle itself appears in its perfect shape, nor will the beautiful unity with which the radii converge to a single point be perceived, but this is all observed as soon as the eye looks forth from the centre. Even so in the parable; if we have recognized its middle point, its main doctrine, in full light, then will the proportion and right signification of all particular circumstances be clear unto us, and we shall lay stress upon them only so far as the main truth is thereby more vividly set forth.'

was even then dead, and so incapable of rendering the homage to him which the others at last did (see John Smith, *Discourses*, p. 178).

[1] Lisco, *Die Parabeln Jesu*, p. 22; a sound and useful work, though content to remain too much on the surface of its subject.

There is another rule which it is important to observe, one so simple and obvious, that were it not continually neglected, one would be content to leave it to the common sense of every interpreter. It is this, that as, in the explanation of the fable, the introduction (*προμύθιον*) and application (*ἐπιμύθιον*) claim to be most carefully attended to, so here what some have entitled the pro-parabola and epi-parabola, though the other terms would have done sufficiently well; which are invariably the finger-posts pointing to the direction in which we are to look for the meaning—the key to the whole matter. The neglect of these often involves in the most untenable explanations; for instance, how many interpretations which have been elaborately worked out of the Labourers in the Vineyard, could never have been so much as once proposed, if heed had been paid to the context, or the necessity been acknowledged of bringing the interpretation into harmony with the saying which introduces and winds up the parable. These helps to interpretation, though rarely or never lacking,[1] are yet given in no fixed or formal manner; sometimes they are supplied by the Lord Himself (Matt. xxii. 14; xxv. 13); sometimes by the inspired narrators of his words (Luke xv. 1, 2; xviii. 1); sometimes, as the prologue, they precede the parable (Luke xviii. 9; xix. 11); sometimes, as the epilogue, they follow (Matt. xxv. 13; Luke xvi. 9). Occasionally a parable is furnished with these helps to a right understanding both at the opening and the close; as is that of the Unmerciful Servant (Matt. xviii. 23), which is suggested by the question which Peter asks (ver. 21), and wound up by the application which the Lord Himself makes (ver. 35). So again the parable at Matt. xx. 1–15

[1] Tertullian (*De Res. Carn.* 33): 'You will find no parable which is not either interpreted by Christ Himself, as that of the Sower, which finds its meaning in the ministry of the word; or explained beforehand by the author of the Gospel, as the parable of the Proud Judge and the Urgent Widow, in its reference to perseverance in prayer; or may be freely conjectured, as the parable of the Fig-tree, whose spreading branches aroused expectation, with its likeness to the unfruitfulness of the Jews.'

begins and finishes with the same saying, and Luke xii. 16–20 is supplied with the same amount of help for its right understanding.[1]

Again, we may observe that a correct interpretation, besides being thus in accordance with its context, must be so without any very violent means being necessary to bring it into such agreement; even as, generally, the interpretation must be easy—if not always easy to discover, yet, being discovered, easy. For it is here as with the laws of nature; the proleptic mind of genius may be needful to discover the law, but, once discovered, it throws back light on itself, and commends itself unto all. And there is this other point of similarity also; it is a proof that we have found the law, when it explains *all* the phenomena, and not merely some; if, sooner or later, they all marshal themselves in order under it; so it is good evidence that we have discovered the right interpretation of a parable, if it leave none of the main circumstances unexplained. A false interpretation will inevitably betray itself, since it will 'invariably paralyse and render nugatory some important member of an entire account.' If we have the right key in our hand, not merely some of the wards, but all, will have their parts corresponding; the key too will turn without grating or over-much forcing; and if we have the right interpretation, it will scarcely need to be defended and made plausible with great appliance of learning, to be propped up by remote allusions to Rabbinical or profane literature, by illustrations drawn from the recesses of antiquity.[2]

[1] Salmeron (*Serm. in Evang. Par.* p. 19) recognizes in the parable a *radix*, a *cortex*, a *medulla*; first, the *radix* or root out of which it grows, which may also be regarded as the final cause or scope with which it is spoken, which is to be looked for in the προμύθιον; next, the *cortex* or outward sensuous array in which it clothes itself; and lastly, the *medulla* or inward core, the spiritual truth which it enfolds.

[2] Teelman (*Comm. in Luc.* xvi. 23): 'Let there be no gaps in the explanation, let it be neither harsh, nor difficult to the hearing or judgment, nor yet ridiculous; let it be easy and reverent, like a gently flowing river let it stream with amenity upon the hearing and the

Once more: the parables may not be made primary sources of doctrine, and seats of this. Doctrines otherwise and already established may be illustrated, or indeed further confirmed by them; but it is not allowable to constitute doctrine first by their aid.[1] They may be the outer ornamental fringe, but not the main texture, of the proof. For from the literal to the figurative, from the clearer to the more obscure, has been ever recognized as the order of Scripture interpretation. This rule, however, has been often forgotten, and controversialists, looking round for arguments with which to sustain some weak position, for which they can find no other support in Scripture, often invent for themselves supports in these. Thus Bellarmine presses the parable of the Good Samaritan, and the circumstance that in that the thieves are said *first* to have stripped the traveller, and *afterwards* to have inflicted wounds on him (Luke x. 30), as proving certain views upon which the Roman Church sets a high value, on the order of man's fall, the succession and

judgment of its hearers; let it be appropriate, close, and removed from all trace of the far-fetched.'

[1] This rule finds its expression in the recognized axiom: 'In theology parables do not count as arguments;' and again: 'Only from the literal meaning can arguments of weight be sought' (see Gerhard, *Loc. Theoll.* ii. 13, 202). There is a beautiful passage in Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, i. 4, on the futility of using as primary arguments, and against gainsayers, what can only serve as the graceful confirmation of truths already on other grounds received and believed. An objector is made to reply to one who presses him with the wonderful correspondences of Scripture. 'All these things should be received as beautiful and as a kind of picture; but if there be not some solid ground on which they may rest, they do not seem to the faithless to be satisfactory; for he who wishes to make a picture, chooses something solid on which to paint, that what he is painting may abide: and so no one paints on water or on air, because there no traces of a picture abide. When, therefore, we display to the faithless these harmonies of which you speak, as a kind of picture of the actual fact, inasmuch as they hold that what we believe is not an actual fact but a figment, they deem us as men painting on a cloud. First we must show the reasonable ground of our truth. Then, that this body of truth, as we may call it, may shine the clearer, these harmonies may be set forth as pictures of the body.'

sequence in which, first losing heavenly gifts, the robe of a divine righteousness, he afterwards, and as a consequence, endured actual hurts in his soul.[1] And in the same way Faustus Socinus argues from the parable of the Unmerciful Servant, that as the king pardoned his servant merely on his petition (Matt. xviii. 32), and not on the score of any satisfaction made, or any mediator intervening, we may from this conclude, that in the same way, and without requiring sacrifice or intercessor, God will pardon sinners simply on the ground of their prayers.[2]

But by much the worst offenders against this rule were the Gnostics and Manichæans in old time, and especially the former. Their whole scheme was one, which however it may have been a result of the Gospel, inasmuch as that set the religious speculation of the world vigorously at work, was yet of independent growth; and they only came to the Scripture to find a varnish, an outer Christian colouring, for a system essentially antichristian;—they came, not to learn its language, but to see if they could not compel it to speak theirs;[3] with no desire to draw *out of* Scripture its meaning, but only to thrust *into* Scripture their own.[4] When they fell thus to

[1] *De Grat. Prim. Hom.*: 'It was not without a reason that the Lord in that parable said that the man was first stripped and afterwards wounded, whereas in real robberies the reverse is usual: plainly He wished to indicate that in this spiritual robbery the wounds of our nature arise from the loss of original righteousness' (see Gerhard, *Loc. Theoll.* ix. 2, 86). His fact is inaccurate, for Eastern robbers are careful to strip, if possible, before they slay; that so the wounds and blood may not injure the garments, often the most precious portion of the spoil.

[2] Deyling, *Obss. Sac.* vol. iv. p. 649. Socinus here sins against another rule of Scripture interpretation as of common sense, which is, that we are not to expect *in every place* the whole circle of Christian truth, and that nothing is proved by the absence of a doctrine from one passage which is clearly stated in others. Thus Jerome (*Adv. Jovin.* 2): 'For all things are not taught in every place; but each similitude is referred to that of which it is a similitude.'

[3] Jerome: 'To twist to their own will a contrary Scripture.'

[4] Irenæus (*Con. Hær.* i. 8): 'That their fabrication might seem to be not without a witness.' All this repeats itself in Swedenborg, who has many resemblances to the Gnostics, especially the distinctive one of a

picking and choosing what in it they might best turn to their ends, the parables naturally invited them almost more than any other portions of Scripture. In the literal portions of Scripture they could find no colour for their scheme; their only refuge therefore was in the figurative, in those which might receive more interpretations than one; such, perhaps, they might bend or compel to their purposes. Accordingly, we find them claiming continually the parables for their own; with no joy, indeed, in their simplicity, or practical depth, or ethical beauty; for they seem to have had no sense or feeling of these; but delighted to superinduce upon them their own capricious and extravagant fancies. Irenæus is continually compelled to rescue the parables from the extreme abuse to which these submitted them; for, indeed, they not merely warped and drew them a little aside, but made them tell wholly a different tale from that which they were intended to tell.[1] Against these Gnostics he lays down that canon, namely, that the parables cannot be in any case the primary, much less the exclusive, foundations of any doctrine, but must be themselves interpreted according to the analogy of faith; since, if every subtle solution of one of these might

division of the Church into spiritual and carnal members. One has well said: 'His spiritual sense of Scripture is one altogether disconnected from the literal sense, is rather a sense before the sense; not a sense to which one mounts up from the steps of that which is below, but in which one must, as by a miracle, be planted, for it is altogether independent of, and disconnected from, the accidental *externum superadditum* of the literal sense.'

[1] In a striking passage (*Con. Hær.* i. 8) he likens their dealing with Scripture, their violent transpositions of it till it became altogether a different thing in their hands, to the fraud of those who should break up some work of exquisite mosaic, wrought by a skilful artificer to present the effigy of a king, and should then recompose the pieces upon some wholly different plan, and make them to express some vile image of a fox or dog, hoping that, since they could point to the stones as being the same, they should be able to persuade the simple that this was the king's image still. In the same manner there is a vile poem by one of the later Latin poets in which he puts together lines and half lines and bits of lines from Virgil, so contriving to weave out of the pure a composition of shameful impurity.

raise itself at once to the dignity and authority of a Christian doctrine, the rule of faith would be nowhere. So to build, as he shows, were to build not on the rock, but on the sand.[1]

Tertullian has the same conflict to maintain. The whole scheme of the Gnostics, as he observes, was a great floating cloud-palace, the figment of their own brain, with no counterpart in the world of spiritual realities. They could therefore mould it as they would; and thus they found no difficulty in forcing the parables to seem to be upon their side, shaping, as they had no scruple in doing, their doctrine according to the leadings and suggestions of these, till they brought the two into apparent agreement with one another. There was nothing to hinder them here; their creed was not a fixed body of divine truth, which they could neither add to nor diminish; which was given them from above, and in which they could only acquiesce; but an invention of their own, which they could therefore fashion, modify, and alter as best suited the purpose they had in hand. We, as Tertullian often urges, are kept within limits in the exposition of the parables, accepting, as we do, the other Scriptures as the rule of truth,

[1] Thus *Con. Hær.* ii. 27: 'Parables must not be applied to matters of uncertainty; for, if this rule be observed, their interpreters interpret without dangers, and the parables will receive at all hands an interpretation on similar lines, and so collectively hold their ground unassailed by truth, and with their parts applied on a common system and without collision. But to link to matters which are not openly asserted, nor put plainly before us, interpretations of parables which anyone invents at his pleasure, is mere folly. For thus the rule of truth will be regarded by none, but as many as are the interpreters of parables, so many truths will there seem to be contending against each other.' So too 3: 'But, forasmuch as parables may receive many interpretations, who that loves the truth will not confess that to leave what is certain and indubitable and true and assert from these aught concerning our enquiry into God's nature, is to act like men who hurl themselves into peril and are devoid of reason? Is not this indeed to build one's house, not on the firm and strong rock, in an open position, but on the unstable waste of sand? Whence also to overthrow buildings of this sort is an easy task.' Cf. ii. 10; and i. 16, for monstrous and fantastic interpretations, after this fashion, of Luke xv. 4–6, and 8, 9. The miracles were made by them to yield similar results (see i. 7; ii. 24).

as the rule, therefore, of their interpretation. It is otherwise with these heretics; their doctrine is their own; they can first dexterously adapt it to the parables, and then bring forward the conformity between the two as a testimony of its truth.[1]

As it was with the Gnostics of the early Church, exactly so was it with the sects which, in a later day, were their spiritual successors, the Cathari and Bogomili. They, too, found in the parables no teaching about sin and grace and redemption, no truths of the kingdom, but fitted to the parables the speculations about the creation, the origin of evil, the fall of angels, which were uppermost in their own minds; which they had not drawn from Scripture; but which having themselves framed, they afterwards turned to Scripture, endeavouring to find there that which they could compel to fall into their scheme. Thus, the apostasy of Satan and his drawing after him a part of the host of heaven, they found set forth by the parable of the Unjust Steward. Satan was the chief steward over God's house, who being deposed from his place of highest trust, drew after him the other angels, with the suggestion of lighter tasks and relief from the burden of their imposed duties.[2]

[1] *De Pudicitiâ*, 8, 9. Among much else which is interesting, he says: 'Heretics draw the parables whither they will, not whither they ought, and are the aptest workers in them. Why so apt? Because from the very beginning they have fashioned the matter of their teaching according to the hints of parables. Unrestricted by the rule of truth, they were free to seek out and put together the doctrines of which the parables seem suggestive.' Thus, too, *De Præsc. Hæret.* 8: 'Valentinus did not devise Scriptures to suit the matter of his teaching, but devised the matter of his teaching to suit the Scriptures.' Compare *De Animâ*, 18.

[2] Neander, *Kirch. Gesch.* vol. v. p. 1082. They dealt more perversely still with the parable of the Unmerciful Servant (*Ibid.* vol. v. p. 1122): This servant, too, with whom the king reckons, is Satan or the Demiurgus; his wife and children, whom the king orders to be sold, the first is Sophia or intelligence, the second the angels subject to him. God pitied him, and did not take from him his higher intelligence, his subjects, or his goods; he promising, if God would have patience with him, to create so great a number of men as should supply the place of the fallen angels. Therefore God gave him permission that for six days, the

But to come to more modern times. Though not testifying to evils at all so grave in the devisers of the scheme, nor leading altogether out of the region of Christian truth, yet sufficiently injurious to the sober interpretation of the parables is such a theory concerning them as that entertained, and in actual exposition carried out, by Cocceius and his followers of what we may call the historico-prophetical school. By the parables, they say, and so far they have right, are declared the mysteries of the kingdom of God. But then, ascribing to those words, 'kingdom of God,' a far too narrow sense, they are resolved to find in every one of the parables a part of the history of that kingdom's progressive development in the world to the latest time. They will not allow any to be merely ethical, but affirm all to be historico-prophetical. Thus, to let one of them speak for himself, in the remarkable words of Krummacher:[1] 'The parables of Jesus have not primarily a moral, but a politico-religious, or theocratic purpose. To use a comparison, we may consider the kingdom of God carried forward under his guidance, as the action, gradually unfolding itself, of an Epos, of which the first germ lay prepared long beforehand in the Jewish economy of the Old Testament, but which through Him began to unfold itself, and will continue to do so to the end of time. The name and superscription of the Epos is, THE KINGDOM OF GOD. The parables belong essentially to the Gospel of the kingdom, not merely as containing its doctrine, but its progressive development. They connect themselves with certain fixed periods of that development, and, as soon as these periods are completed, lose themselves in the very completion; that is, considered as independent portions of the Epos, remaining for us only in the image and external letter.' He must mean, of course, in the same manner and degree as all other fulfilled prophecy; in the light of such accom-

six thousand years of the present world, he should bring to pass what he could with the world which he had created—but this will suffice.

[1] Not the Krummacher lately so popular in England, but his father, himself the author of a volume of very graceful original parables.

plished prophecy, he would say, they must henceforth be regarded.

Boyle gives some, though a very moderate, countenance to the same opinion: 'Some, if not most, do, like those oysters that, besides the meat they afford us, contain pearls, not only include excellent moralities, but comprise important prophecies;' and, having adduced the Mustard-seed and the Wicked Husbandmen as plainly containing such prophecies, he goes on, 'I despair not to see unheeded prophecies disclosed in others of them.'[1] Vitringa's *Elucidation of the Parables*[2] is a practical application of this scheme of interpretation, and one which will scarcely win many supporters for it. Thus, the servant owing the ten thousand talents (Matt. xviii. 23), is the Pope or line of Popes, placed in highest trust in the Church, but who, misusing the powers committed to them, were warned by the invasion of Goths, Lombards, and other barbarians, of judgment at the door, and indeed seemed given into their hands for doom; but being mercifully delivered from this fear of imminent destruction by the Frankish kings, so far from repenting and amending, on the contrary now more than ever oppressed and maltreated the true servants of God, and who therefore should be delivered over to an irreversible doom. He gives a yet more marvellous explanation of the Merchant seeking goodly pearls, this pearl of price being the Church of Geneva

[1] *On the Style of the Holy Scriptures; Fifth Objection.* There is nothing new in this scheme; Origen held it long ago; see, for example, on the Labourers in the Vineyard (*Comm. in Matt.* xx.), how he toils under the sense of some great undisclosed mystery concerning the future destinies of the kingdom lying hidden there. St. Ambrose (*Apolog. Proph. David.* 57) gives a strange historico-prophetical interpretation of Nathan's parable of the Ewe Lamb (2 Sam. xii. 1–4); and Hippolytus (*De Antichristo*, 57) of the Unjust Judge.

[2] Being published, not like most of his other works in Latin, but in Dutch, it is far less known, as indeed it deserves to be, than his other oftentimes very valuable works. I have used a German translation, Frankfort, 1717. The volume consists of more than a thousand closely-printed pages, with a few grains of wheat to be winnowed out from a most unreasonable quantity of chaff.

and the doctrine of Calvin, opposed to all the abortive pearls, that is, to all the other Reformed Churches. Other examples may be found in Cocceius—an interpretation, for instance, of the Ten Virgins, after this same fashion.[1] Deyling has an interesting essay on this school of interpreters, and passes a severe, though not undeserved, condemnation on them.[2] Prophetical, no doubt, many of the parables are; for they declare how the new element of life, which the Lord was bringing into the world, would work—the future influences and results of his doctrine—that the little mustard-seed would grow to a great tree—that the leaven would continue working till it had leavened the whole lump. But they declare not so much the *facts* as the *laws* of the kingdom. Historico-prophetical are only a few; as that of the Wicked Husbandmen, which Boyle adduced, in which there is a clear prophecy of the death of Christ; as that of the Marriage of the King's Son, in which there is an equally clear announcement of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the transfer of the kingdom of God from the Jews to the Gentiles. But this subject will again present itself, when we consider, in their relation to one another, the seven parables in the thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew.

[1] *Schol. in Matt.* xxv. More may be found in Gurtler, *Syst. Theol. Proph.*; as at pp. 542, 676. Deusingius, Teelman, D'Outrein, Solomon Van Till, are among the chief writers of this school.

[2] *Obss. Sac.* vol. v. p. 331, seq. The same scheme of interpretation has been applied by the same school of interpreters to the miracles; as by Lampe in his *Commentary on St. John*,—see, for instance, on the feeding of the five thousand (John vi.) They form the weakest side of a book, most worthy, in many respects, of all honour.

CHAPTER IV.

ON OTHER PARABLES BESIDES THOSE IN THE SCRIPTURES.

The most perfect specimens of this form of composition, and those by which the relative value of all other in the like kind is to be measured, must be sought in that Book which is the most perfect of all books; yet they do not belong exclusively to it. The parable, as St. Jerome has noted, is among the favourite vehicles for conveying moral truth throughout all the East. Our Lord took possession of it, honoured it by thus making it his own, by using it as the vehicle for the highest truth of all. But there were parables before the parables which issued from his lips. It belongs to our subject to say something concerning those, which, though they did not give the pattern to, yet preceded his—concerning those also which were formed more or less immediately on the suggestion and in imitation of his, on the Jewish, that is, and the Christian.

The Jewish parables will occupy us first. Some, indeed, have denied that this method of teaching by parables was current among the Jews before our Saviour's time. They have feared, it would seem, lest it should detract from his glory to suppose that He had availed Himself of a manner of teaching in use already. Yet surely the anxiety to cut off the Lord's teaching from all living connexion with his age and country is very idle; and the suspicion with which parallels from the uninspired Jewish writings have been regarded is altogether misplaced. It is the same anxiety which would cut off the Mosaic legislation and institutions altogether from

Egypt;[1] which cannot with honesty be done, and which there is no object in attempting. For if Christianity be indeed the world-religion, it must gather into one all dispersed rays of light; it must appropriate to itself all elements of truth which are anywhere scattered abroad; not thus adopting what is alien, but rather claiming what is its own.[2] Our blessed Lord so spake, as that his doctrine, in its outward garb, should commend itself to his countrymen. There were inner obstacles enough to their receiving of it; the more need therefore that outwardly it should be attractive. Thus, He appealed to proverbs in common use among them, as at John iv. 37; He quoted the traditionary speeches of their elder Rabbis, to refute, to enlarge, or to correct them. When He found the theological terms of their schools capable of bearing the burden of the new truth which He laid upon them, He willingly used them;[3] and in using, did not deny their old meaning; while at the same time, making all things new, He glorified and transformed it into something infinitely higher, breathed into them the spirit of a new life. 'Thy kingdom come' formed already a part of the Jewish liturgy, yet not the less was it a new prayer on the lips of all who had realized in any measure the idea of the kingdom, and what the coming of that kingdom meant, as *He* first had enabled them to realize it. So 'Peace be unto you' was an ordinary salutation among the Jews, yet having how much deeper a significance, and one how entirely new upon his lips, who *is* our Peace, and who, first causing us to enter ourselves into the peace of God, enables us truly to wish peace, and to speak peace, to our brethren. So, too, a proselyte was in the Jewish schools entitled 'a new creature,' and his passing over to

[1] The attempt fails even when made by so able and learned a man as Witsius. It is not from grounds such as he occupies in his *Ægyptiaca* that books like Spencer's *De Legibus Hebræorum* can be answered.

[2] In the words of Clemens (*Strom.* i. 13): 'Truth is able to gather together her own seeds, even when they fall on alien soil.'

[3] See an essay by Schoettgen (*Hor. Heb.* vol. ii. p. 883): *Christus Rabbinorum summus.*

Judaism was 'a new birth;'[1] yet these terms expressed little more than a change in his outward relations: it remained for Christ to appropriate them to the higher mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Nor less is it certain that the illustrating of doctrines by the help of parables, or briefer comparisons, was common among the Jewish teachers;[2] of them it might almost be said as of Him, that without a parable they spake nothing. The very formulas with which their parables were introduced remind us of those we meet in the Gospels; for instance, the question, 'Whereunto shall I liken it?' is of continual recurrence. But what then? It was not in the newness of the forms, but in the newness of the spirit, that the transcendent glory and excellency of Christ's teaching consisted.

As some may desire to see what these Jewish parables are like, I will quote, not, as is sometimes done, the worst, but the best which I have had the fortune to meet. The following is occasioned by a question which has arisen—namely, Why the good so often die young? God, it is answered, foresees that if they lived they would fall into sin. 'To what is this like? It is like a king who, walking in his garden, saw some roses which were yet buds, breathing an ineffable sweetness. He thought, "If these shed such sweetness while yet they are buds, what will they do when they are fully blown?" After a while, the king entered the garden anew, thinking to find the roses now blown, and to delight himself with their fragrance; but arriving at the place, he found them pale and withered, and yielding no smell. He exclaimed with regret, "Had I gathered them while yet tender and young, and while they gave forth their sweetness, I might have delighted myself with them, but now I have no pleasure

[1] Schoettgen, *Hor. Heb.* vol. i. pp. 328, 704.

[2] Vitringa, *De Synagogâ*, p. 678, seq. Hillel and Schammai were the most illustrious teachers by parables before the time of our Saviour; R. Meir immediately after. With this last, as the tradition goes, the power of inventing parables notably declined. This is not hard to understand. The fig-tree of the Jewish people was withered, and could put forth no fruit any more (Matt. xxi. 19).

in them." The next year the king walked in his garden, and finding rosebuds scattering fragrance, he commanded his servants, "Gather them, that I may enjoy them before they wither, as last year they did." '[1]—The next is ingenious enough, though a notable specimen of Jewish self-righteousness: 'A man had three friends: being summoned to appear before the king, he was terrified, and looked for an advocate: the first, whom he had counted the best, altogether refused to go with him; another replied that he would accompany him to the door of the palace, but could not speak for him; the third, whom he had held in least esteem, appeared with him before the king, and pleaded for him so well as to procure his deliverance. So every man has three friends, when summoned by death before God, his Judge: the first, whom he prized, his money, will not go with him a step; the second, his friends and kinsmen, accompany him to the tomb, but no further, nor can they deliver him in the judgment; while the third, whom he had in least esteem, the Law and good works, appears with him before the king, and delivers him from condemnation.'[2]—But this is in a nobler strain; it is suggested by those words, 'In thy light shall we see light.' 'As a man travelling by night kindled his torch, which, when it was extinguished, he again lit, and again, but at length exclaimed, "How long shall I weary myself in my way? better to wait till the sun arise, and when the sun is shining I will pursue my journey,"—so the Israelites were oppressed in Egypt, but delivered by Moses and Aaron. Again, they were subdued by the Babylonians, when Chananiah, Misael, and Azariah delivered them. Again, they were subdued by the Grecians, when Mattathias and his sons helped them. At length the Romans overcame them, when they cried to God, "We are weary with the continual alternation of oppression

[1] Schoettgen, *Hor. Heb.* vol. i. p. 682.

[2] *Ibid.* vol. i. 1129. This parable, like so much else in the rabbinical books, reappears in many quarters; in the Eastern romance, *Barlaam and Josaphat*, 13; and among the traditional sayings of Mahomet (see Von Hammer, *Fundgruben d. Orients*, vol. i. p. 315). This may be found put into verse in my *Poems*, p. 283.

and deliverance; we ask no further that mortal man may shine upon us, but God, who is holy and blessed for ever.'' '[1] —There is a fine one of the fox, which, seeing the fish in great trouble, darting hither and thither, while the stream was being drawn with nets, proposed to them to leap on dry land. This is put in a Rabbi's mouth, who, when the Græco-Syrian kings were threatening with death all who observed the law, was counselled by his friends to abandon it. He would say, 'We, like the fish in the stream, are indeed in danger now; but yet, while we continue in obedience to God, we are in our proper element, and in one way or another may trust to live; but if, to escape the danger, we forsake that, then we inevitably perish.'[2]—One of much tenderness explains why a proselyte is dearer to the Lord than even a Levite. Such proselyte is compared to a wild goat, which, brought up in a desert, joins itself freely to the flock, and which is cherished by the shepherd with especial love; since, that his flock, which from its youth he had put forth in the morning and brought back at evening, should love him, was nothing strange; but that the goat, brought up in deserts and mountains, should attach itself to him, demanded an especial return of affection.[3]—There are besides these a multitude of briefer ones, *similitudes* rather than *parables*. Thus there *is* one, urging collection of spirit in prayer, to this effect: 'If a man brought a request to an earthly monarch, but, instead of making it, were to turn aside and talk with his neighbour, might not the king be justly displeased?'[4]—In another, the

[1] Schoettgen, *Hor. Heb.* vol. ii. p. 691. [2] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 189.

[3] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 377. This too on the resurrection is good (Cocceius, *Excerpt. Gem.* p. 232): R. Ammin replied to a Sadducee who said, 'Shall the dust live?—I will explain the matter to you by this parable. A certain king had ordered a palace to be built by his slaves in a place which lacked both water and clay. It was done. On its falling to pieces, he bade them rebuild it in a place where there was abundance of both. They declare that they cannot. Then in anger he says to them, When you had neither water nor clay, you were able to build; and now when you have both do you find it impossible?'

[4] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 656. The same comparison with slight variation occurs in Chrysostom, *Hom.* 1, *in Oziam*, and again with further modification, *Hom.* 51, *in Matt.*

death common to all, and the doom after death so different to each, is likened to a king's retinue entering a city at a single gate, but afterwards lodged within it very differently, according to their several dignity.[1] There is a singular one, to explain why God has not told which command should have the greatest reward for its keeping.[2] In another it is shown how body and soul are partners in sin, and so will justly be partners in punishment.[3]

These, among the Jewish parables, with two or three more, which, bearing some resemblance to Evangelical parables, will be noted in their due places, are the most memorable which I have met. The resemblance, it must be owned, even where the strongest, lies on the surface merely, and is nothing so extraordinary as is often given out. To some, indeed, the similarity has appeared so great, as to need in one way or another to be accounted for. These have supposed that our Lord adopted such parables as would in any way fit his purpose, remodelling them and improving as they passed under his hands. Others have thought that the

[1] Schoettgen, *Hor. Heb.* vol. i. p. 388.

[2] *Ibid* vol. i. p. 187.

[3] Cocceius (*Excerpt. Gem.* 232): 'Upon one occasion Antoninus held with the holy Rabbi Jehudâ such a colloquy as this: The body and soul, said he, can deliver themselves from judgment. Do you ask how? Let the Body say, It was the Soul that sinned, for since it left me behold I have lain in the grave senseless and as a stone. But let the Soul say, It was the Body that sinned, for since I was loosed from its bonds behold I fly through the air even as a bird. To this the Rabbi replied, I will give you a parable. A mortal king had a most delightful garden, and when the fruits were ripe set over it two keepers, one lame, the other blind. On seeing the fruit the lame man urged the blind to take him on his shoulders, so that he might gather, and they might both eat alike. So the lame man sat on the blind man's shoulders and gathered the fruits, and they devoured them. Some time afterwards the Lord of the garden came and asked for his fruits. But the blind man pleaded that he had no eyes with which to see, and the lame man that he lacked legs to approach the trees. What did the Lord of the garden? He ordered the one to be taken on the other's shoulders, and then judged and punished both at once. In like manner will God do: the soul will be attached to the body, and He will judge soul and body alike.'

Jewish parables are of later origin than those in the Gospels, and that the Rabbis, while they searched the Christian books for the purpose of ridiculing or gainsaying them, enriched themselves with their spoils, borrowing materials which they afterwards turned to account, concealing carefully the quarter from whence these were derived.[1] Lightfoot has a collection of such sayings under the title: *Wit stolen by the Jews out of the Gospel*;[2] but neither here, nor in the parallels elsewhere adduced, is the resemblance so striking as to carry any conviction of the necessity, or even the probability, of a common origin. The hatred and scorn with which the Jews regarded all foreign literature, most of all the sacred books of the Christians,[3] makes this last supposition extremely improbable.

The resemblance is such as could hardly have been avoided, when the same external life, and the same outward nature, were used as the common storehouse, from whence images, illustrations, and examples were derived alike by all. It may be well at once to consider one, and one of the best, among these Talmudical parables, which pretend to any similarity with our Lord's. It has been sometimes likened to that later part of the Marriage of the King's Son which has to do with the wedding garment. 'The Rabbis have delivered what follows, on Eccl. xii. 7, where it is written, "The spirit shall return unto God who gave it."—He gave it to thee unspotted, see that thou restore it unspotted to Him again. It is like a mortal king, who distributed royal vestments to his servants. Then those that were wise folded them carefully up, and laid them by in the wardrobe; but those that were foolish went their way, and, clothed in these garments, engaged in their ordinary work. After a while, the king required his garments again: the wise returned them white as they had received them; but the foolish, soiled and stained. Then the king was well pleased with the wise, and said,

[1] So Carpzow, Storr, Lightfoot, and Pfeiffer (*Theol. Jud. atque Mohamm.* th. 40-43).

[2] *Erubhin*, chap. 20.

[3] Gfrörer, *Urchristenthum*, vol. i. p. 115, seq.

"Let the vestments be laid up in the wardrobe, and let these depart in peace;" but he was angry with the foolish, and said, "Let the vestments be given to be washed, and those servants be cast into prison:"—so will the Lord do with the bodies of the righteous, as it is written, Isai. lvii. 2; with their souls, 1 Sam. xxv. 29; but with the bodies of the wicked, Isai. xlviii. 22; lvii. 21; and with their souls, 1 Sam. xxv. 29.'[1] But, with the exception of a king appearing in each, and the praise and condemnation turning on a garment, what resemblance is there here? In fact, if we penetrate a little below the surface, there is more similarity between this parable and that of the Talents, as in each case there is the restoration of a deposit, and a dealing with the servants according to their conduct in respect of that deposit. But then, how remote a likeness! How capricious everything here! The distributing of garments which were not to be worn, and afterwards reclaiming them,—what resemblance has this to anything in actual life?[2]—how different from the probability that a nobleman, going into a distant country, should distribute his goods to his servants, and returning, demand from them an account.[3]

[1] Meuschen, *N. T. ex Talm. illust.* p. 117; cf. pp. 111, 194, 195; and Wetstein, *N. T.* pp. 727, 765. Those given by Otto, a converted Jew, who afterwards relapsed into Judaism, in a book entitled *Gali Razia*, have been tampered with by him for the making of the resemblance between them and the Evangelical parables more close, else they would be remarkable indeed (Pfeiffer, *Theol. Jud.* th. 39.)

[2] This, with so many of the rabbinical parables, sins against almost every rule which such compositions must observe, if they would carry any conviction with them. Thus the author of the treatise, *Ad Herennium*, i. 9: 'The verisimilitude of the story depends on our speaking as custom, opinion and nature demand, *i.e.* if the passage of time, the ranks of the characters, the reasons of the plans, the suitableness of the places shall hold together, so that it may not be objected either that there was not time enough, or no good cause, or that the place was unfit, or that the person could not have done or suffered such things.'

[3] Unger (*De Parab. Jes. Nat.* p. 162) observes that he has gone into this comparison of Evangelical with Jewish parables,—'partly that we may be delivered from the fashionable flippant itching for comparing passages from the Rabbis with the teaching of Jesus, which often is of so

This much on the Jewish parables.[1] Among the Fathers of the Christian Church there are not many who have deliberately constructed parables for the setting forth of spiritual mysteries. Two or three such we meet in the *Shepherd* of Hermas. The whole of its third book is indeed parabolical, as it sets forth spiritual truth under sensuous images, only it does this chiefly in visions, that is, in parables for the eye rather than for the ear. There are, however, parables in the stricter sense of the word; this, for example,[2] which is an improved form of the rabbinical parable last quoted: 'Restore to the Lord the spirit entire as thou hast received it: for if thou gavest to a fuller a garment which was entire, and desiredst so to receive it again, but the fuller restored it to thee rent, wouldest thou receive it? Wouldest thou not say in anger, "I delivered to thee my garment entire, wherefore hast thou torn it and made it useless? It is now, on account of the rent which thou hast made in it, of no more service to me." If thou then grievest for thy garment, and complainest because thou receivest it not entire again, how, thinkest thou, will the Lord deal with thee, who gave thee a perfect spirit, but which spirit thou hast marred, so that it can be of no more service to its Lord? for it became useless when it was corrupted by thee.' There are several parables, formally brought forward as such, in the writings of Ephraem Syrus, but such of these as I am acquainted with could scarcely be tamer than they are.[3] Origen has what may be termed a parable, and a very

little use in helping interpretation, . . . partly that we may hence more clearly recognize the superiority of the parables of Jesus.'

[1] There are no parables in the apocryphal gospels. Indeed, where a moral element is altogether wanting, as in these worthless forgeries, it was only to be expected that this, as every other form of communicating spiritual truth, should be looked for in vain.

[2] *Simil.* ix. 32; cf. *Simil.* v. 2. There is a very fair estimate of the merits of these in Donaldson's *History of Christian Literature*, vol. i. p. 271 sqq.

[3] This is the best that I know; of which, however, I only judge in its Latin translation: 'Two men set out for a certain city, which lay some thirty furlongs off. And when they had now accomplished two or three furlongs, they came upon a place by the roadside, where were woods

striking one, by which he seeks to illustrate the peculiar character and method of St. Paul's teaching; its riches, its depths, its obscurities, its vast truths, only partially shown by him, and therefore only partially seen by us. The great characteristics of the Apostle's teaching have not often been so happily seized.[1] Eadmer, a disciple of Anselm, has

and shady trees, and streams of water, and therein much delight. As they gazed at all these, one of the two wayfarers, eagerly bending his course to the city of his desires, passed by the place as one that races; but the other first halted to gaze, and then stayed there. Later on, when he began to wish to issue beyond the shade of the trees, he feared the heat, and thus staying still longer in the spot, and at the same time delighted and absorbed with its pleasantness, was surprised by one of the wild beasts which haunt the wood, and was seized and carried off to its cave. His companion, who had not neglected his journey, neither suffered himself to be stayed by the beauty of the trees, made his way straight to the city.' See also *Parænes*, xxi. 28.

[1] This parable is very fitly introduced in his *Commentary* on the Romans, v. 12–21: 'The Apostle Paul seems to me, especially in the passages which we are now considering, to be speaking somewhat after this fashion—Let us suppose a faithful and prudent servant to be introduced by his master, who is a great king, into the royal treasure-house, and to be shown the different great habitations of which the accesses are various and misleading, so that the entrance is shown him by one path and the exit by another, while sometimes different entrances all lead to the same chamber: and let the faithful servant who is being led round have shown to him one treasury of the king's silver, and another of his gold, and others also of the precious stones, the pearls, and various ornaments, the places also of the royal purple and of the diadems: again let there be shown to him the apartments of the queen in many different mansions; and yet let each several thing be revealed to him with the doors not widely open, but only on the jar, so that while he may recognize his master's treasures and the royal wealth, he may yet have no clear and thorough knowledge of any of them. After this let our servant, who is held in such trust that his king and master has acquainted him with the greatness of his wealth, be sent to gather an army for the king, let him hold a levy, and test soldiers—inasmuch as he is faithful, in order that he may attract more into the king's service, and gather him a greater army, he will feel obliged to reveal in part what he has seen; again, because he is prudent, and knows that it is necessary to keep the king's secrets concealed, he will make use of certain hints rather than of actual statements, so that while the power of the king may be made known, the management of the ordering and decoration of his palace and house-

gathered up a basket of fragments from his sermons and his table-talk. Among these are so many of his similitudes and illustrations as to give a name to the whole collection.[1] There are not a few complete parables here, though none perhaps of that beauty which the works coming directly from his hand might lead us to expect. In the works of St. Francis of Assisi there are two parables, but of little value.[2] Far better are those interspersed through the Greek religious romance of the seventh or eighth century, *Barlaam and Josaphat*, ascribed to John of Damascus, and often printed with his works. They have been justly admired,[3] yet more than one of them is certainly not original, being easily traced up to earlier sources. A good one will be found in the note below.[4]

hold may yet remain hid. After this fashion, then, the Apostle Paul also seems to me to do in these passages, &c.'

[1] *De S. Anselmi Similitudinibus.* It is published at the end of the Benedict. edit. of St. Anselm. I find no better than this, on the keeping of the heart with all diligence, of which I quote no more than is necessary for giving an insight into the whole (41): 'Our heart is like unto a mill which is ever grinding, and which a certain lord gave into the keeping of one of his slaves, with the instruction that he should only grind in it his master's corn, and should himself live on what he ground. But this servant has a certain enemy, who, whenever he finds the mill unguarded, immediately casts into it either sand, which scatters the flour; or pitch, which congeals it; or something which defiles; or chaff, which merely fills its place. If therefore that servant guards his mill well, and only grinds in it his master's corn, he both serves his master, and gains food for himself. Now this mill which is ever grinding something is the human heart, which is incessantly thinking something.' Cf. 42, 46.

[2] *Opp.* Paris, 1641, p. 83.

[3] See Dunlop, *History of Fiction*, London, 1845, p. 40, seq. Wondrously beautiful parables, Rosenkranz (*Gesch. der Poesie*, vol. ii. p. 46) calls them. Cf. the *Wiener Jahrb.* 1824, pp. 26–45; and Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. iv. pp. 176–189.

[4] 'I have heard that there was once a great city, in which the citizens made it a custom and institution to take some foreigner, of no note and utterly unacquainted with and ignorant of the laws and customs of the state, and make him their king, so that for the period of one year he had authority over all things, and freely and without any hindrance could do whatsoever he would. Afterwards, however, as he was living in complete freedom from every kind of anxiety, and was passing his days in luxury and delight without thought of fear, and deeming that the king-

Those which are entitled parables in the writings of St. Bernard,[1] and, whether they be his or no, having much of beauty and instruction in them, are rather allegories than parables, and so do not claim here to be considered.

But if parables, which are professedly such, occur rarely in the works of the early Church writers, the parabolical element is, notwithstanding, very predominant in their teaching, especially in their homilies, which are popular in the truest sense of the word. What boundless stores, for instance,

dom was his in perpetuity, they would suddenly rise against him, strip him of his royal robe, and after dragging him naked throughout the city as if in triumph, would banish him to a certain great and far distant island. Here, unsupplied with food or raiment, he was most miserably beset with hunger and nakedness, and found that the pleasure and gaiety of heart that had been granted him beyond his hope, were now changed again to a sorrow beyond all his hope or expectation. It befell, therefore, according to the ancient custom and institution of those citizens, that there was called to the throne a certain man, endowed with great keenness of wit, who, being in no wise carried away with the sudden felicity which had befallen him, far from imitating the heedlessness of predecessors in the royal dignity who had been miserably cast from it, anxiously and earnestly discussed with himself how he might best provide for his fortunes. In this busy meditation as to these matters he was informed by one of the wisest of his councillors of the custom of the citizens and the place of perpetual exile, and thus understood that without any false step he must needs make himself secure. When, therefore, he knew this, and found that the time was at hand when he would be exiled to the island and leave to others the foreign kingdom that had so strangely come to him, he opened his treasury, of which he at that time enjoyed ready and unrestricted use, and taking a vast quantity of gold, silver, and precious stones, entrusted them to certain of his most faithful slaves, and sent them betimes to the island to which he was to be carried. At the turn of the year the sedition broke out, and the citizens sent him naked into exile, as they had done the former kings. These foolish and short-reigned kings he found distressed with the most grievous famine, but he himself, who, unlike them, had sent his wealth before him, passed his life in perpetual abundance, and in the enjoyment of unbounded pleasure, and casting utterly from him the fear of those treacherous and wicked citizens, extolled himself as happy on the score of his most wise device.' This has been put into verse by Rückert in his *Brahmanische Erzählungen*, and after him by myself, *Poems*, 1875, p. 280. Compare 1 Tim. vi. 19.

[1] In the Benedictine edition, vol. i. p. 1251, seq.

of happy illustration, which might with the greatest ease be thrown into the forms of parables, are laid up in the writings of St. Augustine. One is only perplexed, amid the endless variety, what instances to select: but we may take this one as an example. He is speaking of the Son of God and the sinner as in the same world, and appearing under the same conditions of humanity: 'But,' he proceeds, 'how vast a distance there is between the prisoner in his dungeon, and the visitor that has come to see him! They are both within the walls of the dungeon: those who did not know might suppose them under equal restraint, but one is the compassionate visitor, who can use his freedom when he will, the other is fast bound there for his offences. So great is the difference between Christ, the compassionate visitor of man, and man himself, the criminal in bondage for his offences.'[1] Or, rebuking them that dare in their ignorance to find fault with the arrangements of Providence: 'If you entered the workshop of a blacksmith, you would not dare to find fault with his bellows, anvils, hammers. If you had—not the skill of the workman, but the consideration of a man, what would you say? "It is not without cause the bellows are placed here; the artificer knew, though I do not know, the reason." You would not venture to find fault with the blacksmith in his shop, and do you dare to find fault with God in the world?'[2] Chrysostom, too, is rich in similitudes, which need nothing to be parables, except that they should be presented for such; as, for instance, when speaking of the redemption of the creature, which shall accompany the manifestation of the sons of God, he says, 'To what is the creation like? It is like a nurse that has brought up a royal child, and when he ascends his paternal throne, she too rejoices with him, and is partaker of the benefit.'[3]—But the field here opening before me is too wide to enter on.[4] It is

[1] *In Ep.* 1 *Joh. Tract.* 2.

[2] *Enarr. in Ps.* cxlviii. He has something more nearly approaching to a parable than either of these, *Enarr. in Ps.* ciii. 26.

[3] *Hom. in Rom.* viii. 19.

[4] One, however, from H. de Sto. Victore I must transcribe (*De Sacram.* ii. 14, 8): 'A certain father drives from him his stubborn

of the parables of our Lord, and of those only, that I propose to speak.[1]

son, seemingly in great anger, that by this affliction the son may learn humility. But, when he persists in his stubbornness, by a secret arrangement the father sends to him his mother, who is to go, not as if sent by his father, but as of her own accord prompted by maternal affection, and by her woman's gentleness soften his obstinacy, turn his stubbornness to humility, inform him of the vehemence of his father's anger, promise her own intercession, and suggest healthful counsels . . . telling him that his father may not be appeased save by earnest prayer, but engaging herself to undertake his cause, and promising to conduct the whole matter to a good end.' The mother here he presently explains as Divine Grace.—In Poiret's *Œconomia Divina*, a parable (vol. ii. p. 554, v. 9, 26), too long to quote, is worthy of a reference; another in Salmeron the same, *Serm. in Parab. Evang.* p. 300.

[1] One Persian, however, I will quote for its deep significance (Deslongchamp, *Fables Indiennes*, p. 64). The Persian moralist is speaking of the manner in which frivolous and sensual pleasures cause men to forget all the deeper interests of their spiritual being: 'The human race may best be likened to a man, who, flying from a wild elephant, has taken refuge in a well and is hanging to two branches which cover the opening; he has rested his feet on something which juts out from the sides of the well: these are four snakes which thrust out their heads from their holes; at the bottom of the well he sees a dragon with gaping jaws only waiting for his fall to devour him. He looks to the two branches from which he hangs and he sees that two rats, one black and the other white, are gnawing them at the point where they join the trunk. He takes note, however, of yet another object: it is a hive full of honey-bees; he begins to eat of the honey, and the pleasure this gives him leads him to forget the serpents on which his feet rest, the rats which gnaw the branches from which he hangs, and the danger which menaces him at every instant of becoming the prey of the dragon who awaits the moment of his fall to devour him. His carelessness and self-deception only end with his life. The well is the world full of dangers and miseries; the four snakes are the four humours which combine to form our body, but which, when the equilibrium is disturbed, become so many deadly poisons; the two rats, the one black the other white, are day and night, which successively consume the span of our life; the dragon is the inevitable end which awaits us all; lastly, the honey is the pleasures of the senses, whose deceptive sweetness seduces us and leads us from the path along which we ought to go.' Compare Von Hammer, *Gesch. d. schön. Redek. Pers.* p. 183, and *Barlaam and Josaphat*, 12. S. de Sacy (*Chrest. Arabe*, vol. ii. p. 364) has a parable: and in the *Blüthensammlung aus d. Morgenl. Myst.*, by Tholuck, there are several from the mystical poets of Persia,—for instance, a beautiful one, p. 105.

THE PARABLES.

PARABLE I.

THE SOWER.

MATT. xiii. 3–8, and 18–23; MARK iv. 3–8, and 14–20; LUKE viii. 5–8 and 11–15.

ON the relation in which the seven parables recorded in the thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew, of which this of the Sower is the first, stand to one another, there will be need to say something. But this will best follow after they have all received their separate treatment; and till then, therefore, I shall defer it.

It is the evident intention of the Evangelist to present these parables as the first which the Lord spoke, this of the Sower introducing a manner of teaching which He had not hitherto employed. As much is indicated in the question of the disciples, 'Why speakest thou unto them in parables?' (ver. 10), and in our Lord's answer (ver. 11–17), in which He justifies his use of this method of teaching, and declares his purpose in adopting it; it is involved no less in his treatment of this parable as the fundamental one, on the right understanding of which will depend their comprehension of all which are to follow: '*Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?*' (Mark iv. 13). And as this was the first occasion on which He brought forth these new things out of his treasure (see ver. 22), so was it the occasion

on which He brought them forth with the largest hand. We have nowhere else in the Gospels so rich a group of parables assembled together, so many and so costly pearls strung upon a single thread.

It will not be lost labour to set before ourselves at the outset as vividly as we can, what the aspects of that outward nature were, with which our Lord and the multitudes were surrounded, as He uttered, and they listened to, these divine words. '*Jesus went out of the house*,' probably at Capernaum, the city where He commonly dwelt after his open ministry began (Matt. iv. 13), 'his own city' (Matt. ix. 1), 'which is upon the sea-coast,'[1] and, going out, He '*sat by the sea side*,' that is, by the lake of Genesaret, the scene of so many incidents in his ministry. This lake, called in the Old Testament 'the sea of Chinnereth' (Num. xxxiv. 11; Josh. xii. 3; xiii. 27), from a town so named which stood near its shore (Josh. xix. 35), 'the water of Gennesar' (1 Macc. xi. 67), now Bahr Tabaria, goes by many names in the Gospels. It is simply 'the sea' (Matt. iv. 15; Mark iv. 1), or 'the sea of Galilee' (Matt. xv. 29; John vi. 1); or, as invariably in St. Luke, either 'the lake' (viii. 22), or 'the lake of Gennesaret' (v. 1); sometimes, but this only in St. John, 'the sea of Tiberias,' from the great heathen city of Tiberias on its shores (vi. 1; xxi. 1); being indeed no more than an inland sheet of water, of moderate extent, some sixteen of our miles in length, and not more than six in breadth. But it might well claim regard for its beauty, if not for its extent. The Jewish writers would have it that it was beloved of God above all the waters of Canaan; and indeed, almost all ancient authors who have mentioned it speak in glowing terms of the beauty and rich fertility of its banks. Hence, as some say, its name of Genesaret, or 'the garden of riches,'[2] but the derivation is insecure. And even now, when the land is crushed under the rod of Turkish misrule, many traces of its

[1] Τὴν παραθαλασσίαν (Matt. iv. 13), probably so called to distinguish it from another Capernaum on the brook Kishon.

[2] Jerome (*De Nomin. Heb.*) makes Gennesar = hortus principum.

former beauty remain, many evidences of the fertility which its shores will again assume in the day, which assuredly cannot be very far off, when that rod shall oppress no more. It is true that the olive-gardens and vineyards, which once crowned the high and romantic hills bounding it on the east and the west, have disappeared; but the citron, the orange, and the date-tree are still found there in rich abundance; and in the higher regions the products of a more temperate zone meet together with these; while, lower down, its banks are still covered with aromatic shrubs, and its waters, as of old, are still sweet and wholesome to drink, and always cool, clear, and transparent to the very bottom, and as gently breaking on the fine white sand with which its shores are strewn as they did when the feet of the Son of God trod those sands, or walked upon those waters.[1] On the edge of this beautiful lake the multitude were assembled; the place was convenient; for, 'whilst the lake is almost completely surrounded by mountains, those mountains never come down into the water; but always leave a beach of greater or lesser extent along the water's edge.' Their numbers were such, that probably, as on another day (Luke v. 1), they pressed upon the Lord, so that He found it convenient to enter into a ship;

[1] Josephus (*Bell. Jud.* iii. 10. 7) rises into high poetical animation in describing its attractions; and in Röhr's *Palästina* (termed by Goethe 'a glorious book'), p. 67, there is a very spirited description of this lake and the neighbouring country; see also Lightfoot, *Chorograph. Cent.* lxx. 79; and Meuschen, *Nov. Test. ex Talm. illust.* p. 151. Robinson (*Bibl. Researches*, vol. iii. p. 253) is less enthusiastic in his praise. He speaks, indeed, of the lake as a 'beautiful sheet of limpid water in a deeply depressed basin;' but the form of the hills, 'regular and almost unbroken heights' (p. 312), was to his eye 'rounded and tame,' and, as it was the middle summer when his visit was made, the verdure of the spring had already disappeared, and he complains of a nakedness in the general aspect of the scenery. But the account which transcends all others in the picturesque accuracy of its details, which leaves nothing to be desired by the reader, except that he might himself behold this, 'the most sacred sheet of water which this earth contains,' is to be found in Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 361–378. Compare also Keim, *Jesu von Nazara* vol. i. p. 598 sqq., who on all the mere *externals* of the Gospel history is admirable.

and putting off a little from the shore, He taught them from it, speaking '*many things unto them in parables.*'

First in order is the parable of the Sower; common to the three synoptic Gospels; being with those of the Wicked Husbandmen and the Mustard Seed the only ones contained in all three. It rests, as so many others, on one of the common familiar doings of daily life. Christ, lifting up his eyes, may have seen at no great distance a husbandman scattering his seed in the furrows, may have taken in, indeed, the whole scenery of the parable.[1] As it belongs to the essentially popular nature of the Gospels, that parables should be found in them rather than in the Epistles, where indeed they never appear, so it belongs to the popular character of the parable, that it should thus rest upon the familiar doings of common life, the matters which occupy

> 'the talk
> Man holds with week-day man in the hourly walk
> Of the world's business;'

while the Lord, using these to set forth eternal and spiritual truths, does at the same time ennoble them, showing them continually to reveal and set forth the deepest mysteries of

[1] Dean Stanley, describing the shores of the lake, shows us how easily this may have been: 'A slight recess in the hillside, close upon the plain, disclosed at once, in detail, and with a conjunction which I remember nowhere else in Palestine, every feature of the great parable. There was the undulating corn-field descending to the water's edge. There was the trodden pathway running through the midst of it, with no fence or hedge to prevent the seed from falling here and there on either side of it, or upon it,—itself hard with the constant tramp of horse and mule and human feet. There was the "good" rich soil, which distinguishes the whole of that plain and its neighbourhood from the bare hills elsewhere, descending into the lake, and which, where there is no interruption, produces one vast mass of corn. There was the rocky ground of the hillside protruding here and there through the corn-fields, as elsewhere through the grassy slopes. There were the large bushes of thorn—the *nabk*, that kind of which tradition says that the crown of thorns was woven—springing up, like the fruit-trees of the more inland parts, in the very midst of the waving wheat.' Compare Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, vol. i. p. 115.

his kingdom. '*Behold, a sower went forth to sow*'—what a dignity and significance have these few words, used as the Lord uses them here, given in all after-times to the toils of the husbandman in the furrow!

The comparison of the relations between the teacher and the taught to those between the sower and the soil, the truth communicated being the seed sown, rests on analogies between the worlds of nature and of spirit so true and so profound, that we must not wonder to find it of frequent recurrence; and this, not merely in Scripture (1 Pet. i. 23; 1 John iii. 9), but in the writings of all wiser heathens[1] who have realized at all what teaching means, and what manner of influence the spirit of one man may exercise on the spirits of his fellows. While all words, even of men, which are better than mere breath, are as seeds, able to take root in their minds and hearts who hear them, have germs in them which only unfold by degrees;[2] how eminently must this be true of the words of God, and of these uttered by Him who was Himself the seminal Word which He communicated.[3] Best right of all to the title of seed has that word, which exercising

[1] Grotius is rich in illustrative passages from Greek and Latin writers; he or others have adduced such from Aristotle, Cicero (*Tusc.* ii. 5), Plutarch, Quintilian, Philo, and many more; but it would not be worth while merely to repeat their quotations. I do not observe this one from Seneca (*Ep.* 73): God comes unto men, or rather, more closely still, comes into them. Seeds are scattered in men's bodies which, if received by a good husbandman, shoot up in likeness to their stock and resemble in their growth the things from which they sprang; but if the husbandman is bad, he is as deadly to them as a barren and marshy soil, and fosters refuse instead of fruits.

[2] Thus Shakspeare, of a man of thoughtful wisdom:

> 'his plausive words
> He scattered not in ears, but grafted them
> To grow there and to bear.'

[3] Salmeron (*Serm. in Par. Evang.* p. 30): 'As Christ is the Physician and the physic, the Priest and the victim, the Redeemer and the redemption, the Lawgiver and the law, the Porter and the gate, so is he the Sower and the seed. For neither is the Gospel itself anything other than Christ incarnate, born, preaching, dying, rising, sending the Holy Ghost, gathering, sanctifying and ruling the Church.'

no partial operation on their hearts who receive it, wholly transforms and renews them—that word of living and expanding truth by which men are born anew into the kingdom of God, and which in its effects 'endureth for ever' (1 Pet. i. 23, 25). I cannot doubt that the Lord intended to set Himself forth as the chief sower of the seed (not, of course, to the exclusion of the Apostles[1] and their successors), that here, as in the next parable, '*he that soweth the good seed*' is the Son of man; and this, even though He nowhere, in as many words, announces Himself as such.[2] His entrance into the world was a going forth to sow;[3] the word of the kingdom, which word He first proclaimed, was his seed; the hearts of men his soil; while others were only able to sow, because He had sown first; they did but carry on the work which He had auspicated and begun.

'*And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side*, [*and it was trodden down* (Luke viii. 5)], *and the fowls came and devoured them up*.' Some, that is, fell on the hard footpath or road, where the glebe was not broken, and so could not sink down in the earth, but lay exposed on the surface to the feet of passers-by, till at length it fell an easy prey to the birds, such as in the East are described as following in large flocks the husbandman, to gather up, if they can, the seed-corn which he has scattered. We may indeed see the same nearer home. This parable is one of the very few, whereof we possess an authentic interpretation from the Lord's own lips; and these words He thus explains: '*When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that*

[1] Isidore of Pelusium (*Ep.* 176, p. 326) has a sublime comparison, in which he likens St. Paul to Triptolemus, the winged scatterer of seed through the earth.

[2] See, however, Greswell's arguments to the contrary (*Exp. of the Par.* vol. v. part 2, p. 238).

[3] Salmeron (*Serm. in Parab.* p. 29): 'He is said to go forth through the act of Incarnation, invested with which He went forth even as a husbandman who dons a garment suitable for rain, heat and cold, and yet He was a King.'

which was sown in his heart.' In St. Luke, Satan appears yet more distinctly as the adversary and hinderer of the kingdom of God (of whom as such there will be fitter opportunity of speaking in the following parable), the reason why he snatches the word away being added—'*lest they should believe and be saved.*' How natural it would have been to interpret '*the fowls*' impersonally, as signifying, in a general way, worldly influences hostile to the truth. How almost inevitably, if left to ourselves, we should have so done. Not so, however, the Lord. He beholds the kingdom of evil as it counterworks the kingdom of God gathered up in a personal head, '*the wicked one.*'[1]

The words which St. Matthew alone records, '*and understandeth it not,*' do much for helping us to comprehend what this first condition of mind and heart is, in which the word of God fails to produce even a passing effect. The man '*understandeth it not*;' he does not recognize himself as standing in any relation to the word which he hears, or to the kingdom of grace which that word proclaims. All that speaks of man's connexion with a higher invisible world, all that speaks of sin, of redemption, of holiness, is unintelligible to him, and without significance. But how has he arrived at this state? He has brought himself to it; he has exposed his heart as a common road to every evil influence of the world, till it has become hard as a pavement,[2] till he has laid waste the very soil in which the word of God should have taken root: he has not submitted it to the ploughshare of the law, which would have broken it up; which, if he had suffered it to do its appointed work, would have gone before, preparing that soil to receive the seed of the Gospel. But what renders his case the more hopeless, and takes away even a possibility of the word germinating there, is, that besides the evil condition of the

[1] 'Ο πονηρός in St. Matthew; ὁ Σατανᾶς in St. Mark; ὁ διάβολος in St. Luke.

[2] H. de Sto. Victore (*Annott. in Matt.*): 'The wayside is the heart which is trodden down and dried by the constant passage of evil thoughts.' Corn. a Lapide: 'The wayside is the hardened custom of a worldly and too wanton life.'

soil, there is also *one* watching to take advantage of that evil condition, to use every weapon that man puts into his hands, against man's salvation; and he, lest by possibility such a hearer '*should believe and be saved*,' sends his ministers in the shape of evil thoughts, worldly desires, carnal lusts; and so, as St. Mark records it, '*cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.*' '*This is he which received seed by the way side.*'

There was other seed, which promised at the first to have, but in the end had not truly any, better success. '*Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up,*[1] *they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.*' The '*stony places*' here are to be explained by the '*rock*' of St. Luke, and it is important that the words in St. Matthew, or rather in our Version (for '*rocky* places,'—as, indeed, the Rhemish Version has it,—would have made all clear), do not lead us astray. A soil mingled with stones is not meant; these, however numerous or large, would not certainly hinder the roots from striking deeply downward; for those roots, with an instinct of their own, would feel and find their way, penetrating between the interstices of the stones, till they reached the moisture below. But what is meant is ground such as to a great extent is that of Palestine, where a thin superficial coating of mould covers the surface of a rock; this stretching below it, would present

[1] Ἀνατέλλειν once occurs transitively in the N. T., Matt. v. 45; so Gen. iii. 18, Isai. xlv. 8 (LXX). It is especially used, as here, of the rising of the sun or stars (Num. xxiv. 17; Isai. lx. 1; Mal. iv. 2); but also of the springing up of plants from the earth (Gen. xix. 25; Isai. xliv. 4; Ezek. xvii. 6; Ps. xci. 7); and so ἐξανατέλλω in this present parable. In either sense the title Ἀνατολή belongs to Christ, and has been applied to Him in both; as He is The Branch (Ἀνατολή, Zech. vi. 12, LXX), and as He is The Day-spring (Luke i. 78; cf. Rev. ii. 28; xxii. 16). Ἐκαυματίσθη (Matt. xiii. 6; cf. Mark iv. 6) has been variously rendered; by the Vulgate '*æstuaverunt*'; by Tyndale and Cranmer '**caught heat**'; by Geneva '**were parched**'; by A. V. '**were scorched**'; which is retained in the Revised.

a barrier beyond which it would be wholly impossible that the roots could penetrate, to draw up supplies of nourishment from beneath.[1] While the seed had fallen on shallow earth, therefore the plant the sooner appeared above the surface; and while the rock below hindered it from striking deeply downward, it put forth its energies the more luxuriantly in the stalk. It sprang up without delay, but rooted in no deep soil; and because therefore '*it lacked moisture*,'[2] it was unable to resist the scorching heat of the sun, and being smitten by that, withered and died.[3]

We recur again to the Lord's interpretation of his own words: '*But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it.*' Though the issue proves the same in this case as in the last, the promise is very different. So far from the heart of this class of hearers appearing irreceptive of the truth, the good news of the kingdom is received at once, and with gladness.[4] The joy itself is most appropriate. How should not he be glad, whom the glad tidings have reached (Acts viii. 8; xvi. 34; Gal. v. 22; 1 Pet. i. 6)? But alas! in this case the joy thus suddenly conceived is not, as the sequel too surely proves, a joy springing up from the contemplation of the

[1] Bengel: 'The reference is not to stones lying scattered about a field, but to an unbroken rock or stone under a thin coating of earth.'

[2] Ἰκμάς only here in the N. T.; twice in the Septuagint, Jer. xvii. 8, *καὶ ἔσται ὡς ξύλον εὐθηνοῦν παρ' ὕδατα, καὶ ἐπὶ ἰκμάδα βαλεῖ ῥίζας αὐτοῦ· καὶ οὐ φοβηθήσεται ὅταν ἔλθῃ καῦμα* ('For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by *the river*, and shall not see when heat cometh'), and Job xxvi. 14.

[3] How exactly this is taken from the life, a brief quotation from Pliny (*H. N.* xvii. 3) will show: 'In Syria men use a light ploughshare and shallow furrows, for underneath is a stone which withers the seeds with its heat. The same soil is by Theophrastus described as *ὑπόπετρος* (somewhat rocky). At Matt. vii. 24, 25 (cf. Luke vi. 48), it is implied that one who digs deep enough will everywhere come to rock.

[4] Cocceius: 'Immediately to rejoice is a bad sign, for it is impossible that the word of God, if it be rightly received, should not work in a man dissatisfaction with himself, inward struggle, perplexity, a contrite heart, a broken spirit, hunger and thirst, and, in a word, distress, even as the Saviour taught, Matt. v. 4.'

greatness of the benefit, even after all the counterbalancing costs, and hazards, and sacrifices, have been taken into account, but a joy which springs from an overlooking and leaving out of calculation those costs and hazards. It is this which fatally differences the joy of this class of hearers from that of the finder of the treasure (Matt. xiii. 44), who 'for joy thereof' went and *sold all that he had*, that he might purchase the field which contained the treasure—that is, was willing to deny himself all things, and to suffer all things, that he might win Christ. We have rather here a state of mind not stubbornly repelling the truth, but wofully lacking in all deeper earnestness; such as that of the multitudes which went with Jesus, unconscious what his discipleship involved,—to whom He turned and told, in plainest and most startling words, what the conditions of that discipleship were (Luke xiv. 25 33; Josh. xxiv. 19). This is exactly what the hearer now described has not done; whatever was fair and beautiful in Christianity as it first presents itself, had attracted him—its sweet and comfortable promises,[1] the moral loveliness of its doctrines; but not its answer to the deepest needs of the human heart; as neither, when he received the word with gladness, had he contemplated the having to endure hardness in his warfare with sin and Satan and the world; and this will explain all which follows: '*Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.*'[2] It is not here as in the last case, that Satan

[1] Bede: 'These are the hearts which are delighted for a season with the mere sweetness of the word they hear, and with the heavenly promises.'

[2] Quintilian (*Inst.* i. 3. 3–5) supplies a good parallel; he, it is true, is speaking of the rapid progress and rapid decay in the region of the intellectual, our Lord in that of the moral, life: 'Minds of this kind ripen too early, and with difficulty ever arrive at bearing. . . . They yield quickly, but not much. No true strength underlies them, nor is there any support from deep-sunken roots. The seeds scattered on the surface of the soil burst out too quickly, and the blades, which mimic ears, yellow before harvest-time with empty husks.' Philo (*De Vit. Cont.* § 7) supplies another instructive parallel. He, too, demands for any seed

comes and takes the word out of the heart without further trouble. That word has found some place there, and it needs that he bring some hostile influences to bear against it. What he brings in the present case are outward or inward trials, these being compared to the burning heat of the sun.[1] It is true that the light and warmth of the sun are more often used to set forth the genial and comfortable workings of God's grace (Mal. iv. 2; Matt. v. 45; Isai. lx. 19, 20); but not always, for see Ps. cxxi. 6; Isai. xlix. 10; Rev. vii. 16. As that heat, had the plant been rooted deeply enough, would have furthered its growth, and hastened its ripening, fitting it for the sickle and the barn—so these tribulations would have furthered the growth in grace of the true Christian, and ripened him for heaven. But as the heat scorches the blade which has no deepness of earth, and has sprung up on a shallow ground, so the troubles and afflictions which would have strengthened a true faith, cause a faith which was merely temporary to fail.[2] When these afflictions for the truth's sake arrive, '*he is offended*,' as though some strange thing had happened to him: for then are the times of sifting,[3] and of

which shall indeed live the 'field with a heavy soil' and not the 'stony and trodden places.'

[1] It was with the rising of the sun that the καύσων, the hot desert wind, ἄνεμος ὁ καύσων, as often in the Septuagint (Jer. xviii. 17; Ezek. xvii. 10; xix. 12; Hos. xiii. 15; Jon. iv. 8), commonly began to blow, the deadly effects of which on all vegetation are often referred to (Jon. ix. 8; Jam. i. 11); in which last place σὺν τῷ καύσωνι should not be rendered, 'with a burning heat,' but 'with the burning wind.' Plants thus smitten with the heat are called *torrefacta*, ἡλιούμενα.

[2] Augustine is rich in striking sayings on the different effects which tribulations will have on those that are rooted and grounded in the faith, and those that are otherwise. Thus (*Enarr. in Ps.* 21), speaking of the furnace of affliction: 'There is gold, there is chaff, there the fire works in a narrow space. That fire is not different in itself, but it has different actions; it turns the chaff to ashes, and frees the gold from dirt.' See for the same image Chrysostom, *Ad Pop. Antioch. Hom.* iv. 1.

[3] The very word '*tribulation*,' with which we have rendered θλῖψις, rests on this image—from tribulum, the threshing roller, and signifying those afflictive processes by which in the moral discipline of men God separates their good from their evil, their wheat from their chaff. There

winnowing; and then, too, every one that has no root, or as St. Matthew describes it, '*no root in himself*,' no inward root,[1] falls away.

The having of such an inward root here would answer to having a foundation on the rock, to having oil in the vessels, elsewhere (Matt. vii. 25; xxv. 4). It is no unfrequent image in Scripture (Ephes. iii. 17; Col. ii. 7; Jer. xvii. 8; Hos. ix. 16; Job xix. 28); and has a peculiar fitness and beauty, for as the roots of a tree are out of sight, while yet from them it derives its firmness and stability, so upon the hidden life of the Christian, that life which is out of sight of other men, his firmness and stability depend; and as it is through the hidden roots that the nourishment is drawn up to the stem and branches, and the leaf continues green, and the tree does not cease from bearing fruit, even so in that life which 'is hid with Christ in God' lie the sources of the Christian's strength and of his spiritual prosperity. Such a '*root in himself*' had Peter, who, when many were offended and drew back, exclaimed, 'To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life' (John vi. 68). So, again, when the Hebrew Christians took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had 'in heaven a better and an enduring substance' (Heb. x. 34), this knowledge, this faith concerning their unseen inheritance, was the root which enabled them joyfully to take that loss, and not to draw back unto perdition, as so many had done. Compare 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18, where faith in the unseen eternal things is the root, which, as St. Paul declares, enables him to count the present affliction light, and to endure to the end (cf. Heb. xi. 26). Demas, on the other hand, lacked that root. It might at first sight seem as if he would be more correctly ranged under the third class of hearers; since he forsook Paul, 'having

are some good lines by George Wither expounding this, quoted in my *Study of Words*, 17th edit. p. 49.

[1] With allusion to this passage, men of faith are called in the Greek Fathers βαθύῤῥιζοι, πολύῤῥιζοι. Compare with this division of the parable the *Shepherd* of Hermas, iii. sim. 9. 21.

loved this present world' (2 Tim. iv. 10). But when we examine more closely Paul's condition at Rome at the moment when Demas forsook him, we find it one of extreme outward trial and danger. It would seem then more probable that the immediate cause of his going back, was the tribulation which came for the word's sake.[1]

But there is other seed, of which the fortunes are still to be told. '*And some fell among thorns;*' as fields were often divided by hedges of thorn (Exod. xxii. 6; Mic. vii. 4), this might easily come to pass (Jer. iv. 3; Job v. 5); '*and the thorns sprung up, and choked them,*' or as Wiclif has, *strangled it,*'[2] so that, as St. Mark adds, '*it yielded no fruit.*' This seed fell not so much among thorns that were full grown, as in ground where the roots of these had not been diligently extirpated, in ground which had not been thoroughly purged and cleansed; otherwise it could not be said that '*the thorns sprang up with it*' (Luke viii. 7). They grew together; only the thorns overtopped the good seed, shut them out from the air and light, drew away from their roots the moisture and richness of earth by which they should have been nourished. No wonder that they pined and dwindled in the shade, grew dwarfed and stunted, for the best of the soil did not feed them —forming, indeed, a blade, but unable to form a full corn in the ear, or to bring any fruit to perfection. It is not here, as in the first case, that there was no soil, or none deserving the name; nor yet, as in the second case, that there was a poor or shallow soil. Here there was no lack of soil—it might be good soil; but what lacked was a careful husbandry, a diligent eradication of the mischievous growths, which, unless rooted up, would oppress and strangle whatever sprang up in their midst.

This section of the parable the Lord thus explains: '*He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth*

[1] See Bernard (*De Offic. Episc.* iv. 14, 15) for an interesting discussion, whether the faith of those comprehended under this second head was, as long as it lasted, real or not,—in fact, on the question whether it be possible to fall from grace given.

[2] Columella: 'the choking grass.'

the word; and the care[1] *of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches* [*and the lusts of other things entering in* (Mark iv. 19)] *choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful*,' or as St. Luke gives it, '*they bring no fruit to perfection.*'[2] It is not here, as in the first case, that the word of God is totally ineffectual; nor yet, as in the second case, that after a temporary obedience to the truth, there is an evident falling away from it, such as the withering of the stalk indicates: the profession of a spiritual life is retained, the 'name to live' still remains; but the power of godliness is by degrees eaten out and has departed. And to what disastrous influences are these mournful effects attributed? To two things, the care of this world and its pleasures; these are the thorns and briers that strangle the life of the soul.[3] It may sound strange at first hearing that two causes apparently so diverse should yet be linked together, and have the same hurtful operation ascribed to them. But the Lord, in fact, here presents to us this earthly life on its two sides, under its two aspects. There is, first, its oppressive crushing side, the poor man's toil how to live at all, to keep the wolf from the door, the struggle for a daily subsistence, '*the care*[4] *of this life*,' which, if not met in faith,

[1] Catullus: '*Spinosas* Erycina serens in pectore *curas*' (Erycina sowing in the breast thorny cares).

[2] Οὐ τελεσφοροῦσι. The word occurs only here in the N. T. It is especially used of a woman bringing a child to the birth, or a tree its fruit to maturity (Josephus, *Antt.* i. 6. 3; cf. Plutarch, *De Lib. Ed.* 4: δένδρα ἔγκαρπα καὶ τελεσφόρα).

[3] See the *Shepherd* of Hermas, iii. sim. 9. 20. In the great symbolic language of the outward world, these have a peculiar fitness for the expression of influences hostile to the truth; they are themselves the consequences and evidences of sin, of a curse which has passed on from man to the earth which he inhabits (Gen. iii. 17), till that earth had nothing but a *thorn*-crown to yield to its Lord. It is a sign of the deep fitness of this image that others have been led to select it for the setting forth of the same truth. Thus the Pythagorean Lysis (Baur, *Apollonius*, p. 192): 'Close and thick bushes grow around the mind and heart of those who are not purely initiated into the sciences, overshadowing all the mild, gentle and reasoning element of the soul, and hindering the intellectual from open increase and progress.'

[4] Μέριμνα, by some derived from μερίς (curæ animum divorse trahunt,

hinders the thriving of the spiritual word in the heart. But life has a flattering as well as a threatening side, its pleasures no less than its pains; and as those who have heard and received with gladness the word of the kingdom are still in danger of being crushed by the cares of life, so, no less, of being deceived by its flatteries and its allurements. The old man is not dead in them; it may seem dead for a while, so long as the first joy on account of the treasure found endures; but, unless mortified in earnest, will presently revive in all its strength anew. Unless the soil of the heart be diligently watched, the thorns and briers, of which it seemed a thorough clearance had been made, will again grow up apace, and choke the good seed.[1] While that which God promises is felt to be good, but also what the world promises is felt to be good also, and a good of the same kind, instead of a good merely and altogether subordinate to the other, an attempt will be made to combine the service of the two, to serve God and mammon. But the attempt will be in vain: they who make it will bring no fruit to perfection, will fail to bring forth those perfect

Terence), that which draws the heart different ways (see Hos. x. 2: 'Their heart is divided,' i.e. between God and the world; such a heart constitutes the ἀνὴρ δίψυχος, Jam. i. 8); but this etymology is brought into serious question now.

[1] Thus with a deep heart-knowledge Thauler (*Dom.* xxii. *post Trin. Serm.* 2): 'Ye know yourselves that, when a field or garden is being cleaned from weeds and tares, generally some roots of the tares abide in the depths of the earth, but so as scarcely to be detected. Meanwhile the soil is diligently planted and weeded; but, when the good seeds should spring up, immediately the tares from their deep-seated roots grow with them, and will hurt and destroy the corn and other plants and the good seeds. So, therefore, in the present place also, I mean by these roots all the evil failings and vices hidden away beneath the surface and not yet mortified, which by confession and penitence are indeed, if I may use the term, weeded, and by good exercises ploughed up; but yet the evil bent or tendencies of their vicious roots, such as of pride or luxury, anger or envy, hatred and the like, have been left hidden beneath the surface, and these subsequently spring up, and when the season comes for the divine, the happy, the virtuous and laudable life to bud forth from a man and grow and spring forth, then these most evil offshoots from the hurtful roots also come forth, and scatter, crush and overwhelm the man's fruits and his religious and faithful life.'

fruits of the Spirit which it was the purpose of the word of God to produce in them.[1]

But it is not all the seed which thus sooner or later perishes. The spiritual husbandman is to sow in hope, knowing that with the blessing of the Lord he will not always sow in vain, that a part will prosper.[2] '*But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.*' St. Luke says simply, '*and bare fruit an hundredfold,*' leaving out the two lesser proportions of return; which St. Mark gives, but reverses the order of the three, beginning from the lowest return, and ascending to the highest. The return of a hundred for one is not unheard of in the East, though always mentioned as something extraordinary; thus it is said of Isaac, that he sowed, 'and received in the same year an hundredfold, and the Lord blessed him' (Gen. xxvi. 12); and other examples of the same kind are not wanting.[3]

[1] Ovid's enumeration (*Met.* v. 483–486) of all which may disappoint and defeat the sower's toil exactly corresponds with that of our parable; though with some additions, and in an order a little different:

> Et modo *sol nimius*, nimius modo corripit imber;
> Sideraque ventique nocent; *avidæque volucres*
> Semina jacta legunt; lolium *tribulique* fatigant
> Triticeas messes, et inexpugnabile gramen.
>
> 'Now is there too much sun, now too much rain,
> Now wind and weather harm, and birds again
> Eat greedily your seeds, while tares o'erspread
> Your wheaten crops, and the still-conquering weed.'

[2] Thus the author of a sermon in the *Appendix* to Augustine (*Opp.* vol. vi. p. 597, Bened. ed.): 'Beloved, let not either the fear of thorns, or the stony rocks, or the hardness of the road, terrify us, so long as in our sowing of the word of God we may arrive at last at the good land. Let the word of God be received by every field, by every man, whether barren or fertile. I must sow, look thou how thou receivest; I must bestow, look thou what fruit thou renderest.'

[3] According to Herodotus two-hundredfold was a common return in the plain of Babylon, and sometimes three; and Niebuhr (*Beschreib. v. Arab.* p. 153) mentions a species of maize that returns four-hundredfold. Wetstein (in loc.) has collected examples from antiquity of returns far greater than that of the text. See, too, V. Raumer, *Palästina*, p. 92.

We learn that '*he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty,*' or, with the important variation of St. Luke, '*That on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience*'—important, because in these words comes distinctly forward a difficulty, which equally existed in every record of the parable, but might in the others have been overlooked and evaded; while yet on its right solution a successful interpretation must altogether depend. What is this '*honest and good heart*'? How can any heart be called '*good*' before the Word and the Spirit have made it so?—and yet here the seed *finds* a good soil, does not *make* it. The same question elsewhere recurs, as when Christ declares, 'He that is of God heareth God's words' (John viii. 47); and again, 'Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice' (John xviii. 37). For who in this sinful world can be called 'of the truth'? Is it not the universal doctrine of Scripture that men *become* 'of the truth' through hearing Christ's words, not that they hear his words because they are 'of the truth;' that the heart is good, through receiving the word; not that it receives the word, because it is good?[1] This is certainly the scriptural doctrine, and he teaches *preposterously*, to use the word in its most proper sense, who teaches otherwise. At the same time those passages in St. John, and the words before us, with much else in Scripture, bear witness to the fact that there are conditions of heart which yield readier entrance to the truth than others;—'being of the truth,'—'being of God,'—'doing the truth,'—'having the soil of *an honest and good heart*,'—all pointing in this

[1] Augustine (*In Ev. Joh. Tract.* 12) puts the difficulty, and solves it thus: 'What is this? For of whom were there good works? Didst Thou not come to justify the wicked?' He replies: 'The beginning of good works is the confession of evil ones. Thou workest truth, and comest to the light. In what does this working truth consist? Thou dost not caress, nor soothe nor flatter thyself; thou dost not say, I am just, when thou art unjust; this is to begin to work truth.'

direction. Inasmuch as these all express a condition *anterior* to hearing God's word—to coming to the light—to bringing forth fruit—they cannot indicate a state of mind and heart in which the truth, in the highest sense of that word, is positive and realized, but only one in which there is a preparedness to receive and to retain it. There is none good but One (Matt. xix. 17); and yet the Scripture speaks often of *good* men: even so no heart is absolutely a good soil; yet relatively it may be affirmed of some, that their hearts are a soil fitter for receiving the seed of everlasting life than those of others. Thus the 'son of peace' will alone receive the message of peace (Luke x. 6; Matt. x. 13; cf. Acts xiii. 48), while yet only the reception of that message will make him truly and in the highest sense a 'son of peace.' He was before, indeed, a *latent* son of peace, but it is the Gospel which first makes actual that which hitherto was only potential. And thus the preaching of the word may be likened to the scattering of sparks, which, where they find tinder, fasten there, and kindle into a flame; where they do not find it, expire; or that word of the truth may be regarded as a loadstone thrust in among the world's rubbish, attracting to itself all particles of true metal, which but for it *would* never, as they *could* never, have extricated themselves from the surrounding mass, however they testify their affinity to the loadstone, now that it is brought in contact with them.

Exactly thus among those to whom the word of the Gospel came, there were two divisions of men, and the same will always subsist in the world. There were, first, the false-hearted, who called evil good and good evil, who loved their darkness, and hated the light that would make that darkness manifest (John iii. 20; Ephes. v. 13), who, when that light of the Lord shone round about them, only drew further back into their own darkness; self-excusers and self-justifiers; such as were for the most part the Scribes and the Pharisees with whom He came in contact. But there were also others, sinners as well, often, as regards actual transgression of positive law, much greater sinners than those first, but who

yet acknowledged their evil—had no wish to alter the everlasting relations between right and wrong—who, when the light appeared, did not refuse to be drawn to it, even though they knew that it would condemn their darkness, that it would require an entire renewing of their hearts and remodelling of their lives: such were the Matthews and the Zacchæuses, and sinful women not a few, with all who confessed their deeds, justifying not themselves but God. Not that I would prefer to instance these as examples of the '*good and honest heart*,' except in so far as it is needful to guard against a Pelagian abuse of the phrase, and to show how the Lord's language here does not condemn even great and grievous sinners to an incapacity for receiving the word of life. Nathanael would be a yet more perfect specimen of the class referred to—the 'Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile'[1] (John i. 47), in other words, the man with the soil of '*an honest and good heart*,' fitted for receiving and nourishing the word of everlasting life, and for bringing forth fruit with patience; one of a simple, truthful, earnest nature; who had been faithful to the light which he had, diligent in the performance of the duties which he knew, who had not been resisting God's preparation in him for imparting to him at the last his best gift, even the knowledge of his Son; who with all this, knowing himself a sinner, did not affirm that he was righteous. For we must keep ever in mind that the good soil as much comes from God as the seed which is to find there its home. The law and the preaching of repentance, God's secret and preventing grace, run before the preaching of the word of the kingdom; and thus when that word comes, it finds men with a less or a greater readiness to receive it for what indeed it is, a word of eternal life.[2]

[1] Augustine: 'If guile was not in him, the Physician pronounced that he was healable, not that he was whole. In what way was guile not in him? If he is a sinner, he confesses himself to be one. For if he is a sinner, and says that he is just, there is guile in his mouth. Therefore in Nathanael He praised the confession of sin, He did not pronounce him not to be a sinner.'

[2] On this subject of the '*honest and good heart*' there is an admirable

When the different measures of prosperity are given, the seed bringing forth '*some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold*,' it seems difficult to determine whether these indicate different degrees of fidelity in those that receive the truth, according to which they bring forth fruit unto God more or less abundantly; or rather different spheres of action, more or less wide, which they are appointed to occupy;—as in another parable to one servant were given five talents, to another two; in which instance the diligence and fidelity appear to have been equal, and the meed of praise the same, since each gained in proportion to the talents committed to him, though these talents were many more in one case than in the other (Luke xix. 16–19): probably the former is meant.[1] The words which St. Luke records (ver. 18), '*Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have*' (cf. Mark iv. 33), are very important for the averting of a misunderstanding, which else might easily have arisen here. The disciples might have been in danger of supposing that these four conditions of heart, in which the word found its hearers, were permanent, immutable, fixed for evermore; and therefore that in one heart the word must flourish, in another that it could never germinate at all, in others that it could only prosper for a little while. There is no such immoral fatalism in Scripture. It left to the Gnostics to distribute men into two classes, one capable of a higher life, and the other incapable. It declares

discussion by Jackson, the great Arminian divine of the 17th century, *The Eternal Truth of Scripture*, iv. 8.

[1] So Irenæus (*Con. Hær.* v. 39, 2) must have understood it, and Cyprian (*Ep.* 69): 'The spiritual grace which in baptism is received by the faithful equally, in our subsequent behaviour and actions is either diminished or increased, as in the Gospel the seed of the Lord is sown equally, but, according to the different nature of the soil, in some cases is wasted, in others is augmented by the luxuriant crop to the varying abundance of thirty, sixty, or an hundred fold.' So too Theodoret (*in Cant.* vi. 8), who finds here, as he does at John xiv. 2, an evidence of the 'many different degrees of the pious.'

all to be capable; even as it summons all to be partakers of the same; and the warning, '*Take heed how ye hear*,' testifies as much, for it tells us that in each case, according as the word is heard and received, will its success be—that a man's whole anterior life will greatly influence the manner of his reception of that word, seeing that all which he has gone through will have wrought either to the improving or the deteriorating of the soil of his heart, and will thus render more probable or less probable that the seeds of God's word will prosper there, and bring forth in him that hears fruit that shall remain (Jam. i. 21).

For while it is true, and the thought is a very awful one, that there is such a thing as laying waste the very soil in which the seed of eternal life should have taken root—that every act of sin, of unfaithfulness to the light within us, is, as it were, a treading of the ground into more hardness, so that the seed shall not sink in it,—or a wasting of the soil, so that the seed shall find no nutriment there,—or a fitting of it to a kindlier nourishing of thorns and briers than of good seed;—yet on the other hand, even for those who have brought themselves into these evil conditions, a recovery is still, through the grace of God, possible: the hard soil may again become soft,—the shallow soil may become rich and deep,—and the soil beset with thorns open and clear.[1] For the heavenly seed in this differs from the earthly, that the latter, as it finds, so it must use its soil, for it cannot alter its nature. But the

[1] So Augustine (*Serm.* lxxiii. 3): 'Change ye when ye are able: turn the hard ground with the plough, cast forth the stones from the field, and uproot from it the thorns. Refuse to have a hard heart, whence the word of God quickly perishes. Refuse to have a thin soil, where the root of love takes no firm hold. Refuse to choke with worldly cares and desires the good seed which is sown in you by our labours. For it is the Lord who sows: we are his workmen. But be ye the good soil.' Cf. *Serm.* ci. 3; and the author of a sermon, Augustine, *Opp.* vol. vi. p. 597, Bened. ed.: 'If thou feelest that thou art a barren, a thorny, or a parched soil, betake thee to thy Creator. For what is now to be done is that thou be renewed, that thou be fructified and watered by Him who turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water-springs (Ps. cvii. 35–37).'

heavenly seed, if acted upon by the soil where it is cast, also reacts more mightily upon it, softening it where it was hard (Jer. xxiii. 29), deepening it where it was shallow, cutting up and extirpating the roots of evil where it was encumbered with these; and, wherever it is allowed free course, transforming and ennobling each of these inferior soils, till it has become that which man's heart was at the beginning and before the Fall; good ground, fit to afford nourishment to that divine word, the seed of everlasting life [1] (1 Pet. i. 23–25).

[1] As our Saviour here, so the Jewish doctors divide the hearers of the words of wisdom into four classes. The best they liken to a sponge which, drinking in all that it receives, again expresses it for others; the worst to a strainer which, letting all the good wine pass through, retains only the worthless dregs; or to a sieve that, passing the fine flour, keeps back only the bran.—Prudentius (*Con. Symm.* ii. v. 1022) has put this parable well into verse. Here are a few lines in an English dress:

> Christ gave these precepts to direct our toil:
> When seeds ye cast in furrows shun the soil
> Made hard by wasting stones; there let nought fall,
> For there the tender seedling first of all
> In hasty bounteousness itself arrays,
> Then fails of sap, and summer's burning days
> Wither and waste away its thirsting life.
> Nor let your seed fall where sharp briers are rife,
> For there, soon as your crop springs from the ground,
> Harsh bonds entangle it, and all around
> With pointed thorns hem in each tender stalk.
> Nor strow your grain on roads where men most walk,
> There birds make it their prey, and eat their fill,
> And carrion crows work on it their foul will.
> . . . . . .
> Such care as this upon our fields outlaid
> With fruit an hundredfold will be repaid.

Nor would I willingly leave unquoted here some admirable words of Godet in his *Commentary on St. Luke*, vol. i. p. 465: 'Jesus discerned in the crowd four kinds of faces; some which were dull and inattentive, some enthusiastic and full of rapture, some with a serious but preoccupied expression, and lastly countenances serenely joyful which proclaimed a complete surrender to the truth He was teaching. . . . The first class includes those who are thoroughly insensible to religion: they have no spiritual needs, no terror of judgment, no desire of salvation, and consequently no leaning towards the gospel of Christ. . . . The

second are weak-hearted but easily influenced, and their imagination and sensibility make up for a time for the absence of moral sense. The novelty of the Gospel and the opposition it offers to received ideas charm them. In almost every revival such men form a considerable portion of the new converts. The third class consists of those who are earnest but undecided; they seek salvation and recognize the value of the Gospel; but they wish also for worldly success and have not resolved to renounce all for truth. . . . The spiritual needs of the fourth class govern their lives. Moral sense is not dormant in them as in those of the first class; it is this consciousness, and not imagination and feeling, which guides their will; it dominates the earthly preoccupations which prevail with those of the third class.'

PARABLE II.

THE TARES.

MATTHEW xiii. 24–30, and 36–43.

'ANOTHER *parable put he forth unto them*,'—or better, '*set he before them*' [1]—'*saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed* [2] *tares* [3] *among the wheat, and went his way.*' Our Lord did not imagine here a form of malice without example, but adduced one which may have been familiar enough to his hearers, one so easy of execution, involving so little risk, and yet effecting so great and lasting

[1] Παρέθηκεν αὐτοῖς. Some expositors have found more in these words than the Evangelist probably intended; thus Jerome, who explains them thus: 'Like a rich master of a household refreshing his guests with different kinds of food.' But see Exod. xix. 7 (LXX).

[2] In the Vulgate *super*seminavit, as in the Rhemish '*over*sowed,' according to the reading, ἐπέσπειρεν, which Lachmann retains; but which has hardly sufficient authority to warrant a finding of room for it in the text.

[3] Ζιζάνιον nowhere occurs but here, and in the Greek and Latin Fathers who have drawn it from hence. The derivation, παρὰ τὸ σῖτος καὶ ἰζάνω, that which grows side by side with the wheat, is absurd; the word is no doubt oriental, Persian (see Pott, *Etym. Forschungen*, vol. ii. pt. 1, p. 810) or Arabic. The plant itself is identical, as there can be little doubt, with our own bearded darnel, the αἶρα or lolium *temulentum* (in German tollkorn, in French ivroie), so named to distinguish it from the lolium proper, and to indicate the vertigo which it causes, when mingled with and eaten in bread; as in the East will sometimes happen. See the *Dictionary of the Bible*, s. v. *Tares*, and Tristram, *Natural History of the Bible*, p. 486.

a mischief, that it is not strange, if where cowardice and malice met, they should have often displayed themselves in this shape. We meet traces of it in various quarters. In Roman law the possibility of this form of injury is contemplated; and a modern writer, illustrating Scripture from the manners and habits of the East, with which he had become familiar through a lengthened sojourn there, affirms the same to be now practised in India. 'See,' he says, 'that lurking villain watching for the time when his neighbour shall plough his field: he carefully marks the period when the work has been finished, and goes in the night following, and casts in what the natives call *pandinellu*, *i.e.* pig-paddy; this being of rapid growth, springs up before the good seed, and scatters itself before the other can be reaped, so that the poor owner of the field will be for years before he can get rid of the troublesome weed. But there is another noisome plant which these wretches cast into the ground of those they hate, called *perum-pirandi*, which is more destructive to vegetation than any other plant. Has a man purchased a field out of the hands of another, the offended person says, "I will plant the perum-pirandi in his grounds."'[1]

Of this parable also we have an authentic interpretation from the lips which uttered it. And this is well: for on its interpretation much has turned before now. References or allusions to it occur at every turn of the controversy which the Church maintained with the Donatists; and its whole exposition will need to be carried out with an eye to questions which may seem out of date, but which, in one shape or another, continually reappear, and demand to receive their solution. There can be no question who is the Sower of the good seed here. '*He that sowed the good seed is the Son of*

[1] Roberts, *Oriental Illustrations*, p. 541. A friend, who has occupied a judicial station in India, confirms this account. Neither are we without this form of malice nearer home. Thus in Ireland I have known an outgoing tenant, in spite at his eviction, to sow wild oats in the fields which he was leaving. These, like the tares of the parable, ripening and seeding before the crops in which they were mingled, it became next to impossible to extirpate them (inexpugnabile gramen, Ovid).

man.' This title, by which our Lord most often designates Himself, is only in a single instance given to Him by another (Acts vii. 56), and then can hardly indicate more than that the glorified Saviour appeared, wearing still a human shape, to the eyes of Stephen. To the Jews this name, though drawn from the Old Testament, from the great apocalyptic vision of Daniel (vii. 13), was so strange, that when they heard it, they asked, 'Who is this Son of man?' (John xii. 34); not 'Son of man,' but 'Son of David,' being the popular name for the expected Messiah (Matt. ix. 27; xii. 23; xv. 22; xx. 31, &c.) He claimed by this title a true participation in our human nature; this, and much more than this. He was 'Son of man,' as alone realizing all which in the idea of man was contained,—as the second Adam, the head and representative of the race,—the one true and perfect flower which had ever unfolded itself out of the root and stalk of humanity. Claiming this title for his own, He witnessed against opposite poles of error concerning his person—the Ebionite, to which the exclusive use of the title 'Son of David' might have led, and the Gnostic, which denied the reality of the human nature that He bore.

But if Christ is the Sower in this, exactly in the same sense as in the preceding, parable, the seed here receives an interpretation different from that which it there obtained. There 'the seed is the word of God' (Luke viii. 11), or 'the word of the kingdom;' here '*the good seed are the children of the kingdom.*' And yet there is no real disagreement; only a *progress* from that parable to this. In that, the word of God is the instrument by which men are born anew and become children of the kingdom (Jam. i. 18; 1. Pet. i. 23); in this that word has done its work; has been received into hearts; is incorporated with living men; is so vitally united with them who through it have been made children of the kingdom, that the two cannot any more be contemplated asunder (cf. Jer. xxxi. 27; Hos. ii. 23; Zech. x. 9).

The next words, '*The field is the world,*' at once bring us into the heart of that controversy referred to already. Over

these few words, simple as they may seem, there has perhaps been more contention than over any single phrase in the Scripture, if we except the consecrating words at the Holy Eucharist. Apart from mere personal questions affecting the regularity of certain ordinations, the grounds on which the Donatists of Africa justified their separation from the Church Catholic were these: The idea of the Church, they said, is that of a perfectly holy body; holiness is not merely *one* of its essential predicates, but *the* essential, its exclusive note. They did not deny that hypocrites might possibly lie concealed in its bosom; but where the evidently ungodly are suffered to remain in communion with it, not separated off by the exercise of godly discipline, there it forfeits the character of the true Church, and the faithful must come out from it, if they would not, by contact with these unholy, themselves be defiled. Such was their position, in support of which they urged Isai. lii. 1, and all such Scriptures as spoke of the Church's future freedom from all evil. These were meant, they said, to apply to it in its present condition; and consequently, where they failed to apply, *there* could not be the Church.

On this, as on so many other points, the Church owes to Augustine, not the forming of her doctrine, for that she can owe to no man, but the bringing out into her own clear consciousness that which hitherto she had implicitly possessed, yet had not wrought out into a perfect clearness even for herself. He replied, not gainsaying the truth which the Donatists proclaimed, namely, that holiness is an essential note of the Church; but only refusing to accept their definition of that holiness, and showing that in the Church which they had forsaken this note was to be found, and combined with other as essential ones—catholicity, for instance, to which *they* could make no claim. The Church Catholic, he replied, despite all appearances to the contrary, *is* a holy body, for they only are its members who are in true and living fellowship with Christ, and therefore partakers of his sanctifying Spirit. All others, however they may have the outward marks of belonging to it, are *in* it, but not *of* it: they *press* upon Christ, as the thronging

multitude: they do not *touch* Him, as did that believing woman, on whom alone his virtue went forth (Luke viii. 45). There are certain outward conditions without which one cannot belong to his Church, but with which one does not of necessity do so. And they who are thus in it, but not of it, whether hypocrites lying hid, or open offenders who from their numbers may not without worse inconveniences ensuing be expelled,[1] do not defile the true members, so long as these neither share in their spirit, nor communicate with their evil deeds. They are like the unclean animals in the same ark as the clean (Gen. vii. 2), goats in the same pastures with the sheep (Matt. xxv. 32), bad fish in the same net with the good (Matt. xiii. 47), chaff on the same barn-floor as the grain (Matt. iii. 12), vessels to dishonour in the same great house with the vessels to honour (2 Tim. ii. 20), or, as here, tares growing in the same field with the wheat, endured for a while, but in the end to be separated from it, and for ever.

The Donatists would have fain made the Church, in its visible form and historic manifestation, identical and coextensive with the true Church which the Lord knoweth and not man. Augustine also affirmed the *identity* of the Church now existing with the final and glorious Church; but denied that the two were coextensive. For now the Church is clogged

[1] On the extent to which discipline should be enforced, and the questions of prudence which should determine its enforcing, Augustine has the following remarks. Having referred to these parables, and to the separation of the sheep and goats (Matt. xxv. 31–46), he proceeds (*Ad Don. post Coll.* 5): 'By which parables and figures the Church is foreannounced as destined, even unto the end of the world, to contain both good and bad, but in such a manner that the bad cannot injure the good, since they are either unknown, or, for the sake of the peace and the tranquillity of the Church, are tolerated, if it be inexpedient for them to be publicly accused, or if they cannot be pointed out to the good among whom they live. Yet, for all this, the zeal for amendment is not to sleep, but must use reproof, degradation, excommunication, and all other lawful and allowed means of coercion, which are daily practised without disturbance to the peace of unity in the Church, and with undiminished love, . . . lest haply tolerance without discipline shall foster iniquity, or discipline without tolerance dissolve unity.' On all this matter see the admirable discussion by Field, *Of the Church*, i. 7–18.

with certain accretions, which shall hereafter be shown *not* to belong, and never to have belonged, to it. He did not affirm, as his opponents charged him, two Churches, but two conditions of one Church; the present, in which evil is endured in it; the future, in which it shall be free from all evil;—not two bodies of Christ; but one body, wherein now are wicked men, but only as evil humours in the natural body, which in the day of perfect health will be expelled and rejected altogether, as never having more than accidentally belonged to it; and he laid especial stress upon this fact, that the Lord Himself had not contemplated his Church, in its present state, as perfectly free from evil.[1] At this point of the controversy the present parable and that of the Draw-net came in. From these he concluded that, as tares are mingled with wheat, and bad fish with good, so the wicked shall be with the righteous, and shall remain so mingled to the end of the present age;[2] and this not merely as an historic fact; but that all attempts to have it otherwise are, in this parable at least,

[1] Augustine (*Serm.* cccli. 4): 'Many, like Peter, are corrected; many, like Judas, are tolerated; many are unknown until the Lord shall come to light up the secrets of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of hearts.' Again: 'I am a man and live among men, nor do I dare to claim for myself a better dwelling-place than was the ark of Noah.' He often rebukes the Donatists for their low Pharisaical views concerning what the separation from sinners meant. Thus (*Serm.* lxxxviii. 20): 'If it displeased thee that a man sinned, thou didst not touch the unclean. If thou didst confute, reprove and admonish him, and, if need was, didst administer to him such fitting discipline as does not violate unity, thou didst, indeed, come out from him.' Elsewhere he asks, Did the prophet of old, who said, 'Go ye out of the midst of her' (Isai. lii. 11) himself separate from the Jewish church?—'By withholding from consent he touched not the unclean: by his reproofs he went forth free in the sight of God: nor unto him does God impute these sins, neither as his own, for he did not do them, neither as of others, for he did not approve them, nor yet as negligence, for he kept not silence, nor yet as pride, for he abode in unity.' See also *Ad Don. post Coll.* 20. Once more: 'An angel fell; did he pollute heaven? Adam fell; did he pollute Paradise? One of the sons of Noah fell; did he pollute the house of the just? Judas fell; did he pollute the choirs of the Apostles?'

[2] Augustine: 'The condition of a field is one thing, the quiet of a barn another.

expressly forbidden (ver. 29). The Donatists were acting as the servants would have done, if, in face of the householder's distinct prohibition, they had gone and sought to root out with violence the tares.

The Donatists were put to hard shifts to escape these conclusions. They did, however, make answer thus: 'By Christ's own showing, "*the field*" is not the Church, but "*the world*" (ver. 38); the parable, therefore, does not bear on the dispute betwixt us and you; for that is not whether ungodly men should be endured *in the world* (which we all allow), but whether they should be suffered *in the Church*.'[1] It must, however, be evident to every one not warped by a previous dogmatic interest,[2] that the parable is, as the Lord announces, concerning 'the kingdom of heaven,' or the Church. It required no special teaching to acquaint the disciples that *in the world* there would ever be a mixture of good and bad; while they could have so little anticipated the same in the Church, that it behoved to warn them beforehand, both that they might not be offended, counting the promises of God to have failed, and also that they might know how to behave themselves, when that mystery of iniquity, now foretold,

[1] See how Augustine answers this argument, *Ad Don. post Coll.* 8. As the Donatists professed to make much of Cyprian's authority, Augustine quotes often from him (as *Con. Gaudent.* ii. 4), words which show that he understood the parable as one relating to the Church: 'For although there seem to be tares *in the Church*, yet this must not so hamper either our faith or our love as to make our perception that there are tares *in the Church* a reason for falling away from the Church. It is our part only to labour that we may be corn, so that when the corn shall begin to be garnered in the barns of the Lord, we may receive fruit for our work and for our labour.'

[2] Commentators who have interpreted the parable, irrespectively of that controversy one way or the other, acknowledge this. Thus Calvin: 'Although Christ afterwards adds that the field is the world, it yet cannot be doubted that He intended a special reference to the Church, the original subject of his discourse. Inasmuch, however, as He was about to guide his plough in all directions through all quarters of the world, so that He might till fields for himself in all the world, and scatter the seed of life, by a synecdoche He transferred to the world that which accorded better with only a part.'

should begin manifestly to work. Nor need the term '*world*' here used perplex us in the least. No narrower term would have sufficed for Him, in whose prophetic eye the word of the Gospel was contemplated as going forth into all lands, as seed scattered in every quarter of the great outfield of the nations.

It was '*while men slept*' that the enemy sowed his tares among the wheat. Many have found this statement significant, have understood it to suggest negligence and lack of watchfulness on the part of the rulers in the Church, whereby ungodly men creep into it unawares, introducing errors in doctrine and in practice[1] (Acts xx. 29, 30; Jude 4; 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2, 19); even as the sleeping of the wise virgins no less than the foolish has been sometimes urged in the same sense (Matt. xxv. 5). There is, alas! always more or less of this negligence; yet I cannot think that it was meant to be noted here; and as little there. If any should have watched, it is '*the servants*;' but they first appear in a later period in the story; nor is any want of due vigilance laid to their charge. The men therefore who slept are not, as I take it, those who should or could have done otherwise, but the phrase is equivalent to 'at night,' and must not be further urged (Job xxxiii. 15; Mark iv. 27). This enemy seized his opportunity, when all eyes were closed in sleep, and wrought the secret mischief upon which he was intent, and having wrought it undetected, withdrew.

'*The enemy that sowed them is the devil.*'[2] We behold

[1] So Augustine (*Quæst. ex Matt.* qu. 9): 'When the overseers of the Church were somewhat negligent;' and Chrysostom. H. de Sto. Victore (*Annott. in Matth.*): 'He points to the death of the Apostles, or the sloth of prelates.' But Grotius more rightly: 'The word men is here used indefinitely, not of a class: as were you to say, in the time of sleep: and thus we have nothing more than a description of the occasion;' and Cajetan's remark has value: 'When *men* slept: He does not say when the *watchers* slept. If He had said watchers, we should understand that the carelessness of the watchers was to blame. But He says men, that we may understand blameless persons, taking their natural rest.' Jerome's 'while the *master of the house* slept' (*Adv. Lucif.*) can only be explained on this view.

[2] Zizaniator, as there he has been called; see Du Cange, s. v.

Satan here, not as he works beyond the limits of the Church, deceiving the world, but in his far deeper malignity, as he at once mimics and counterworks the work of Christ: in the words of Chrysostom, 'after the prophets, the false prophets; after the Apostles, the false apostles; after Christ, Antichrist.'[1] Most worthy of notice is the plainness with which the doctrine concerning Satan and his agency, his active hostility to the blessedness of man, of which there is so little in the Old Testament, comes out in the New; as in the parable of the Sower, and again in this. As the lights become brighter, the shadows become deeper. Not till the mightier power of good had been revealed, were men suffered to know how mighty was the power of evil; and even now it is only to the innermost circle of disciples that the explanation concerning Satan is given.[2] Nor is it less observable that Satan is spoken of as *his* enemy, the enemy of the Son of man; for here, as so often, the general conflict is set forth as rather between Satan and the Son of man, than between Satan and God. It was essential to the scheme of redemption, that the victory over evil should be a *moral* triumph, not one obtained by a mere putting forth of superior strength.[3] For this end it was most important that man, who lost the battle, should also win it (1 Cor. xv. 21); and therefore as by and through man the kingdom of darkness was to be overthrown, so the enmity of the Serpent was specially directed against the seed of the woman, the Son of man. In the title '*the wicked one*,' which he bears, the article is emphatic, and points him out as the absolutely evil, the very *ground* of whose being is evil. For as God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all (1 John i.

zizanium: and by Tertullian (*De Animâ*, 16), 'He that cometh after and soweth weeds, the midnight spoiler of the corn.' When Ignatius exhorts the Ephesians (c. 10) that no one be found among them τοῦ διαβόλου βοτάνη, 'the devil's fodder,' there is probably an allusion to this parable.

[1] Cf. Tertullian, *De Præscr. Hæret.* 31.

[2] Bengel (on Ephes. vi. 12) has observed this: 'The more openly a book of Scripture deals with the economy and glory of Christ, the more openly it treats of the opposite kingdom of darkness.'

[3] In Augustine's memorable words: 'The devil was to be conquered not by the power of God, but by justice.'

5 ; Jam. i. 17), so Satan is darkness, and in him is no light at all ; ' there is *no* truth in him ' (John viii. 44). Man is in a middle position ; he detains the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. i. 18) ; light and darkness in him are struggling ; but, whichever may predominate, the other is there, kept down indeed, but still with the possibility of manifesting itself. And thus a redemption is possible for man, for his will is only *perverted* ; but Satan's is *inverted*. He has said what no man could ever fully say, or, at least, act on to the full : ' Evil, be thou my good ; ' and therefore, so far as we can see, a redemption and restoration are impossible for him.

The mischief done, the enemy '*went his way* ;' and thus the work did not evidently and at once appear to be his. How often, in the Church, the beginnings of evil have been scarcely discernible ; and that which bore the worst fruit in the end, will have shown at first like a higher form of good. St. Paul, indeed, could detect a mystery of iniquity as yet in its obscure beginnings, could detect the *punctum saliens* out of which it would unfold itself ; but to many, evil would not appear as evil till it had grown to more ungodliness. '*But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also ;* ' appeared, that is, for what they were, showed themselves in their true nature. Many have noted the remarkable similarity which exists between the wheat and this *lolium* or tare, as long as they are yet in the blade.[1] Being only distinguishable when the ear is formed, they fulfil literally the Lord's words, '*by their fruits* ye shall know them.' Augustine, upon this that only when the blade began to ripen

[1] The testimony of Jerome, himself resident in Palestine, may here be adduced : ' Between wheat and the weeds which we call tares, so long as they are green, and the blade has not yet come to an ear, the resemblance is great, and the difference to the eye either nothing at all or very difficult to make out.' See also Thomson (*The Land and the Book*, p. 420) : ' The grain is just in the proper stage to illustrate the parable. In those parts where the grain has *headed out*, the tares have done the same, and then a child cannot mistake them for wheat or barley ; but where both are less developed, the closest scrutiny will often fail to detect them. Even the farmers, who in this country generally *weed* their fields, do not attempt to separate the one from the other.

and bring forth fruit, the tares showed themselves as such indeed, most truly remarks, that it is the opposition of good which first makes evil to appear; 'None appear evil in the Church, except to him who is good;' and again, 'When any shall have begun to be a spiritual man, judging all things, then errors begin to appear to him;'[1] and elsewhere, drawing from the depths of his Christian experience: 'It is a great labour of the good, to bear the contrary manners of the wicked; by which he who is not offended has profited little: for the righteous, in proportion as he recedes from his own wickedness, is grieved at that of others.'[2] As there must be light with which to contrast the darkness, height wherewith to measure depth, so there must be holiness to be grieved at unholiness; only the new man in us is grieved at the old either in ourselves or in others.

'*So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?*' These servants are not, as Theophylact suggests, the angels (they are '*the reapers*;' ver. 30, 41); but rather men, zealous for the Lord's honour, but not knowing what spirit they are of, any more than James and John, who would fain have called fire from heaven on the inhospitable Samaritan village (Luke ix. 54). The question which they ask, '*Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field?*' expresses well the perplexity, the surprise, the inward questionings which must often be felt, which in the first ages, before long custom had too much reconciled to the mournful fact, must have been felt very strongly by all who were zealous for God, at the woful and unlooked-for spectacle which the visible Church presented. Where was the 'glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing?' Well, in-

[1] *Quæst. ex Matt.* qu. 13: an admirable exposition of the whole parable.

[2] 'The just man is tormented by the wickedness of another in proportion as he departs from his own.' Cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* cxix. 4, and *in Ps.* cxl.: 'I am not yet wholly restored to the image of my Maker; I have begun to be shaped anew, and on that side on which I am reformed, I am grieved by that which is unlovely.'

deed, might the faithful have questioned their own spirits, have poured out their hearts in prayer, of which the burden should have been exactly this, '*Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?*—didst not Thou constitute thy Church to be a pure and holy communion?—is not the doctrine such as should only produce fruits of righteousness?—whence then is it that even within the holy precincts themselves there should be so many who themselves openly sin and cause others to sin?'[1] In the householder's reply, '*An enemy hath done this*,' the mischief is traced up to its source; and that not the imperfection, ignorance, weakness, which cling to everything human, and which would prevent even a Divine idea from being more than very imperfectly realized by men; but the distinct counterworking of the great spiritual enemy; '*the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil.*'

In the question which follows, '*Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?*' the temptation to use violent means for the suppression of error, a temptation which the Church itself has sometimes failed to resist, finds its voice and utterance.[2] But they who thus speak are unfit to be trusted in this matter. They have often no better than a Jehu's 'zeal for the Lord' (2 Kin. x. 16); it is but an Elias-zeal at the best (Luke ix. 54). And therefore '*he said, Nay.*' By this

[1] Menken: 'This question, "*Whence then hath it tares?*" is the result of our first study of Church history, and remains afterwards the motto of Church history, and the riddle which should be solved by help of a faithful history; instead of which, many so-called Church historians, ignorant of the purpose and of the hidden glory of the Church, have their pleasure in the tares, and imagine themselves wonderfully wise and useful, when out of Church history, which ought to be the history of the Light and the Truth, they have made a shameful history of error and wickedness. They have no desire to edify, to further holiness or the knowledge of the truth; but at the expense of the Church would gratify a proud and ignorant world.'

[2] Augustine (*Quæst. ex Matt.* qu. 12): 'She may feel the wish arise to remove such men from human dealings, if occasion will allow; but, as to whether she ought to do this, she consults the justice of God, to know if He gives her this commandment or permission, and whether He wishes this to be the work of men.'

prohibition are forbidden all such measures for the excision of heretics, as shall leave them no room for after repentance or amendment; indeed the prohibition is so clear, so express, that whenever we meet in Church history with aught which looks like a carrying out of this proposal, we may be tolerably sure that it is not wheat making war on tares, but tares seeking to root out wheat. The reason of the prohibition is given: '*Lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.*' This might be, either by rooting up what were now tares, but hereafter should become wheat—'*children of the wicked one*,' who, by faith and repentance, should become '*children of the kingdom;*'[1] or through the servants' error, who, with the best intentions, should fail to distinguish between these and those, and involve good and bad in a common doom; or who perhaps, leaving tares, might pluck up wheat. It is only the Lord Himself, the Searcher of hearts, who with absolute certainty 'knoweth them that are his.' The later Roman Catholic expositors, and as many as in the middle ages wrote in the interests of Rome, in these words, '*lest ye root up also the wheat with them*,' find a loophole whereby they may escape the prohibition itself. Thus Aquinas will have it to be only then binding, when this danger exists of plucking up the wheat together with the tares.[2] To which Maldonatus adds, that in each particular case the householder is to judge whether there be such danger or not; and the Pope being now the representative of the householder, to him the question should be put, '*Wilt thou that we go and gather up the tares?*' and he concludes his exposition with an exhortation to all Catholic princes, that they imitate the zeal of these servants, and rather, like them, need to have their eagerness restrained, than require, as did so many, to be stimulated to the task of rooting out heresies and heretics.

[1] Jerome: 'We are warned not hastily to cut off our brother from us, since it may be that he who is to-day corrupted by hurtful doctrine, to-morrow may return to wisdom and begin to defend the truth.'

[2] *Summa Theol.* 2ª 2æ, qu. 10: 'Where there is no such danger . . . let not the severity of discipline slumber.'

At the same time this '*Nay*' does not imply that the tares shall never be plucked up, but only that this is not the time, and they not the doers;[1] for the householder adds, '*Let both grow together until the harvest.*' Pregnant words, which tell us that evil is not, as so many dream, gradually to wane and disappear before good, the world to find itself in the Church, but each to unfold itself more fully, out of its own root, after its own kind: till at last they stand face to face, each in its highest manifestation, in the persons of Christ and of Antichrist; on the one hand, an incarnate God, on the other the man in whom the fulness of all Satanic power will dwell bodily. Both must grow '*until the harvest*,' till they are ripe, one for destruction, and the other for full salvation.

And they are to grow '*together*;' the visible Church is to have its intermixture of good and bad until the end of time; and, by consequence, the fact of bad being found mingled with good will in nowise justify a separation from it, or an attempt to set up a little Church of our own.[2] Where men will attempt this, besides the guilt of transgressing a plain command, it is not difficult to see what darkness it must bring upon them, into what a snare of pride it must cast them. For while, even in the best of men, there is the same intermixture of good and evil as in the visible Church, such a course will inevitably lead a man to a wilful shutting of his eyes alike to the evil in himself, and in that little schismatical body which he will then call the Church, since only so the attempt will

[1] Bengel: 'The zeal which the righteous have against the tares is not blamed, but only reduced to rule.'

[2] Calvin's words are excellent: 'There is this dangerous temptation, that we should think that there is no Church wherever perfect purity is not apparent. When a man is a prey to this temptation, it must needs come to this: that either he will secede from every one else, and think himself the only holy person in the world, or he will join with a few hypocrites in setting up a peculiar Church. What reason, then, had Paul for acknowledging a Church of God at Corinth? Plainly because he recognized among them Gospel teaching, baptism, and the Lord's Supper, and these are the signs by which a Church ought to be recognized.'

even seem to be attended with success. Thus Augustine often appeals to the fact that the Donatists had not succeeded —they would not themselves dare to assert that they had succeeded—in forming what should even externally appear a pure communion: and since by their own acknowledgment there might be, and probably were, hypocrites and undetected ungodly livers among them, this of itself rendered all such passages as Isai. lii. 1, as inapplicable to them as to the Catholic Church in its present condition: while yet, on the strength of this freedom from evil gratuitously assumed by them, they displayed a spirit of intolerable pride and presumptuous uncharitableness towards the Church from which they had separated. And the same sins cleave more or less to all schismatical bodies, which, under plea of a purer communion, have divided from the Church Catholic:[1] the smallest of these, from its very smallness persuading itself that it is the most select and purest, being generally the guiltiest here. None will deny that the temptation to this lies very close to us all. Every young Christian, in the time of his first zeal, is tempted to be somewhat of a Donatist in spirit. It would argue little love or holy earnestness in him, if he had not this longing to see the Church of his Saviour a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle. But he must learn that the desire, righteous and holy as in itself it is, yet is not to find its fulfilment in this present evil time; that, on the contrary, the suffering from false brethren is one of the pressures upon him, which shall wring out from him a more earnest prayer that the Kingdom of God may appear.[2] He must learn that all

[1] See Augustine (*Coll. Carth.* iii. 9) for an extraordinary instance of this pride on the part of the Donatist adversaries of the Church.

[2] Fuller (*Holy State*, v. 2) enumerates six reasons why in the kingdom of grace wicked men should be inseparably mingled with godly: 'First, because hypocrites can never be severed but by Him that can search the heart; secondly, because if men should make the separation, weak Christians would be counted no Christians, and those who have a grain of grace under a load of imperfections would be counted reprobates; thirdly, because God's vessels of honour for all eternity, not as yet appearing, but wallowing in sin, would be made castaways; fourthly, because God by the mixture of the wicked with the godly will try the

self-willed and impatient attempts, such as have been repeated again and again, to anticipate that perfect communion of saints, are works of the flesh; that, however fairly they may promise, no blessing will rest upon them, nor will they for long even *appear* to be crowned with success.[1]

Some in modern times, fearing lest arguments should be drawn from this parable to the prejudice of attempts to revive stricter discipline in the Church, have sought to escape the dangers which they feared,[2] by urging that in our Lord's explanation no notice is taken of the proposal made by the servants (ver. 28), nor yet of the householder's reply to that proposal (ver. 29). They conclude from this that the parable is not to teach us what the conduct of the servants of a heavenly Lord *ought* to be, but merely prophetic of what generally it *will* be,—that this proposal of the servants is merely brought in to afford an opportunity for the master's reply, and that of this reply the latter is the only significant portion. But, assuredly, when Christ asserts that it is his

watchfulness and patience of his servants; fifthly, because thereby He will bestow many favours on the wicked, to clear his justice and render them the more inexcusable; lastly, because the mixture of the wicked grieving the godly will make them the more heartily pray for the day of judgment.'

[1] Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* xcix. 1): 'Whither is the Christian to separate himself that he may not groan amid false brothers? Should he seek the wilderness, scandals follow him. Is he who has made good progress to separate himself, so that he may have no man to tolerate? But what if, before he make progress, he himself find tolerance from none? If, therefore, because he progresses he is willing to tolerate no man, by this very intolerance he is convicted of not having progressed. Because thou seemest to thyself to have had swift feet for the passage, art thou therefore to cut off the bridge?'—The whole passage excellently sets forth the vanity of the attempt to found a Church on a subjective instead of an objective basis, on the personal holiness of the members, instead of recognizing one there to be founded for us, where the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments administered, by those duly commissioned thereto. How admirable are his words elsewhere (*Con. Cresc.* iii. 35): 'I shun the chaff, lest I become chaff; I shun not the threshing-floor, lest I become nothing': cf. *Serm.* clxiv. 7, 8.

[2] Steiger, in the *Evang. Kirch. Zeit.* 1833, and an able writer in the *British Critic*, No. lii. p. 385.

purpose to make a complete and solemn separation at the end, He implicitly forbids,—not the exercise in the meantime of a godly discipline, not, where that has become necessary, absolute exclusion from Church fellowship—but any attempts to anticipate the final irrevocable separation, of which He has reserved the execution to himself.[1] '*In the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.*' Not now, but '*in the time of harvest,*'[2] shall this separation find place; and even then, not they, but '*the reapers,* shall carry it through.[3] This '*time of harvest,*' as the Lord presently explains, is '*the end of the world,*'[4] and

[1] Tertullian (*Apol.* 41): 'He who has once appointed an eternal judgment after the end of the world, does not hasten that separation which is the condition of judgment, before the end of the world.'

[2] Bishop Horseley (*Bibl. Crit.* vol. iii. p. 344) distinguishes between the vintage and the harvest, the two images under which the consummation of the present age is commonly represented. 'The vintage is always an image of the season of judgment, but the harvest of the ingathering of the objects of God's final mercy. I am not aware that a single unexceptionable instance is to be found, in which the harvest is a type of judgment. In Rev. xiv. 15, 16, the sickle is thrust into the ripe harvest, and the earth is reaped, *i.e.* the elect are gathered from the four winds of heaven. The wheat of God is gathered into his barn (Matt. xiii. 30). After this reaping of the earth the sickle is applied to the clusters of the vine, and they are cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God (Rev. xiv. 18–20). This is judgment. In Joel iii. 13 the ripe harvest is the harvest of the vine, *i.e.* the grapes fit for gathering, as appears by the context. In Jer. li. 33 the act of threshing the corn upon the floor, not the harvest, is the image of judgment. It is true the burning of the tares in our Saviour's parable (Matt. xiii.) is a work of judgment, and of the time of harvest, previous to the binding of the sheaves; but it is an accidental adjunct of the business, not the harvest itself.'

[3] Augustine: 'Dost thou dare to usurp the office of another which even in the harvest shall not be thine?' And Cyprian (see 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21): 'Let us take pains and, as far as we may, let us labour that we may be the vessel of gold and silver. But to break the vessels of clay is permitted to the Lord alone, to whom also the rod of iron has been given.' Jerome (*Adv. Lucif.*): 'No one can take to himself the ensign of Christ, or can judge of men before the day of judgment. If the Church has been already purified, what do we reserve for the Lord.'

[4] The *συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος*, or *τῶν αἰώνων* (Heb. ix. 26), the juncture of

'*the reapers are the angels*;' who are here, as everywhere else, set forth as accompanying their Lord and ours at his coming again to judgment (Matt. xvi. 27; xxiv. 31; 2 Thess. i. 7; Rev. xix. 14), and fulfilling his will both in respect of those who have served (Matt. xxiv. 31) and those who have served Him not (Matt. xiii. 49; xxii. 13)

'*As therefore the tares are gathered*[1] *and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend,*[2] *and them which do iniquity*;' in the words of Zephaniah, 'the stumbling-blocks with the wicked' (i. 3). The setting forth of the terrible doom of ungodly men under the image of the burning with fire of thorns, briers, weeds, offal, chaff, barren branches, dead trees, is frequent in Scripture; thus see 2 Sam. xxiii. 6, 7; Matt. iii. 10, 12; vii. 19; John xv. 6; Heb. vi. 8; x. 26, 27; Isai. v. 24; ix. 18, 19; x. 16, 17; xxxiii. 11, 12; lxvi. 24; 2 Esd. xvi. 77, 78. But dare we speak of it as an image merely? The fire reappears in the interpretation of the parable; the angels '*shall cast them*,' those, namely, '*which do iniquity*,' '*into a furnace of fire*.' Fearful words indeed! and the image, if it be an image, at all events borrowed from the most dreadful

the two æras, see Job (xxiv. 20, *μέχρι συντελείας φωτὸς καὶ σκότους*), the present, called *αἰὼν ἐνεστώς* (Gal. i. 4), *αἰὼν οὗτος* (Luke xx. 34), or *ὁ νῦν αἰών* (Tit. ii. 12), = *κόσμος οὗτος* with the future termed *αἰὼν ἐρχόμενος* (Mark x. 30), *αἰῶνες ἐπερχόμενοι* (Ephes. ii. 7), *αἰὼν ὁ μέλλων* (Heb. vi. 5), = *οἰκουμένη ἡ μέλλουσα* (Heb. ii. 5). The phrase is equivalent to the *τέλη τῶν αἰώνων* (1 Cor. x. 11), the extremities the two æras, the end of the one and the beginning of the other.

[1] Augustine: 'That is to say, the rapacious with the rapacious, adulterers with adulterers, homicides with homicides, thieves with thieves, scoffers with scoffers, like with like.' It is exactly so in the *Inferno* of Dante.

[2] Σκάνδαλον (in its classical form *σκανδάληθρον*) is that part of a trap or snare on which the bait is placed, and which, being touched, gives way, and causes the noose to draw suddenly tight; then generally a snare. In the New Testament it is transferred to spiritual things, and includes whatever, entangling as it were men's feet, might cause them to fall; it is therefore = *πρόσκομμα*, and allied closely in meaning to *παγίς* and *θήρα*, with which we find it joined, Rom. xi. 9.

and painful form of death in use among men. Something we read of it in Scripture. Judah would have fain made his daughter-in-law (Gen. xxxviii. 24), and David, alas! did make the children of Ammon (2 Sam. xii. 31), taste the dreadfulness of it.[1] It was in use among the Chaldeans (Jer. xxix. 22; Dan. iii. 6); and in the Jewish tradition, which is probably of great antiquity, Nimrod cast Abraham into a furnace of fire for refusing to worship his false gods.[2] It was one of the forms of cruel death with which Antiochus Epiphanes sought to overcome the heroic constancy of the Jewish confessors in the time of the Maccabees (2 Macc. vii.; Dan. xi. 33; 1 Cor. xiii. 3); while the 'tunica molesta' with which Nero clothed the early Christian martyrs, when he desired to turn from himself upon them the odium of the burning of Rome, is well known.[3] In modern times, Chardin makes mention of penal furnaces in Persia;[4] while the fires of the Inquisition cast their baleful light over whole centuries of the Church's history. Whatever the '*furnace of fire*' may mean here, or 'the lake of fire' (Rev. xix. 20; xxi. 10), 'the fire that is not quenched' (Mark ix. 44), the 'everlasting fire' (Matt. xxv. 41; cf. Luke xvi. 24; Mal. iv. 1), elsewhere, this at all events is certain; that they point to some doom so intolerable that the Son of God came down from heaven and tasted all the bitterness of death, that He might deliver us from ever knowing the secrets of anguish, which, unless God be mocking men with empty threats, are shut up in these terrible words: '*There shall be wailing* (cf. Judith xvi. 17) *and gnashing of teeth*' (cf. Matt. xxii. 13; Luke xiii. 28). All which has just gone before makes very unlikely their explanation of the '*gnashing of teeth*,' who take it as a chattering from excessive cold;[5] who, in fact, imagine here a kind of Dantean Hell,

[1] For the use of this punishment by Herod the Great, see Josephus, *B. J.* i. 33. 4.

[2] Eisenmenger, *Entdeckt. Judenth.* vol. ii. p. 378.

[3] Juvenal, viii. 235; cf. i. 155; Tacitus, *Annal.* xv. 44.; Seneca, *Ep.* xiv. 4; Josephus, *B. J.* i. 33. 4.

[4] *Voy. en Perse*, ed. Langlès, vol. vi. p. 118.

[5] See Suicer, s. v. *βρυγμός*, which some make = *τρισμὸς ὀδόντων*, but it

with alternations of heat and cold, alike unendurable. We take these rather as the utterances generally of rage and impatience (Acts vii. 54; Job xvi. 9; Lam. ii. 16; Ps. xxxv. 16; xxxvii. 12), under the sense of intolerable pain and unutterable loss.[1]

'*Then*,' after it has been thus done with the wicked, '*shall the righteous shine forth*[2] *as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*.' As *fire* was the element of the dark and cruel

is simpler to say with Bernard: 'Weeping from grief, gnashing of teeth from rage;' for in Cyprian's words (*Ad Demet.*): 'The grief of repentance shall then be without fruit, an empty wailing over punishment, and a vain cry for relief.' See Ambrose, *Exp. in Luc.* vii. 205, 206; and Gerhard, *Loc. Theoll.* xxxi. 6, 46.

[1] The Revised Version, which renders these words 'There shall be *the* weeping and gnashing of teeth,' that by comparison with which all other shall be slightly accounted of, has not missed the force of the article, which the Authorized has done.

[2] Ἐκλάμψουσιν = *ef*fulgebunt, not as in the Vulgate, fulgebunt. Schleusner indeed: 'It differs little from the simple λάμπω,'—but Passow: 'To shine forth, to be manifested suddenly in perfect glory:' there is used the same word to express the same thing, Dan. xii. 3, LXX; cf. Wisd. of Solomon, iii. 7, ἀναλάμψουσιν. Two beautiful similitudes in the *Shepherd* of Hermas (iii. sim. 3 and 4) set forth the same truth under a different image. The Seer is shown in the first a number of trees in the winter-time; all leafless alike; all seeming alike dead; and he is told that as the dry and the green trees are not distinguishable in the winter, all being bare alike, so neither in the present age are the just from sinners. In the second, he is again shown the trees, but now some are putting forth leaves, while others still remain bare. Thus shall it be in the future age, which for the just shall be a summer, their life, which was hidden for a while, manifesting itself openly, but for sinners it shall still be winter, and they, remaining without leaf or fruit, shall as dry wood be cut down for burning. In some beautiful passages of Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* xxxvi. 2; *in Ps.* cxlviii. 13) the same image occurs. Of the Christian as he is now, he says (*In 1 Ep. Joh. Tract.* 5): 'His glory is hidden; when the Lord cometh, then shall his glory appear. For it thrives, but as yet as in winter; the root thrives, but the branches are as if withered. Within is the sap which thrives, within are the leaves of trees, within is the fruit: but they await the summer.' Cf. Minucius Felix (p. 329, ed. Ouzel.): 'The body is in the world like trees which in time of winter hide their verdure with a cloak of aridity. Why art thou in haste that, while winter is yet raw, it should blossom forth and revive? Of the body also we must await the spring.'

kingdom of hell, so is *light* of the pure heavenly kingdom.[1] '*Then*,' when the dark hindering element has been removed, shall this element of light, which was before struggling with and obstructed by it, come forth in its full brightness (see Col. iii. 4; Rom. viii. 18; Prov. iv. 18; xxv. 4, 5). A glory shall be revealed *in* the saints; not merely brought *to* them, and added from without; but rather a glory which they before had, but which did not before evidently appear, shall burst forth and show itself openly, as once in the days of his flesh, at the moment of his Transfiguration, did the hidden glory of their Lord (Matt. xvii. 2). That shall be the day of 'the manifestation of the sons of God;' they '*shall shine forth as the sun*' when the clouds are rolled away (Dan. xii. 3); they shall evidently appear, and be acknowledged by all, as 'the children of light,' of that God who is 'the Father of Lights'[2] (Jam. i. 17); who is Light, and in whom is no darkness at all (1 John i. 5). And then, but not till then, shall be accomplished those glorious prophecies so often repeated in the Old Testament; 'Henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean' (Isai. lii. 1); 'In that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts' (Zech. xiv. 21); 'Thy people also shall be all righteous' (Isai. lx. 21; cf. Isai. xxxv. 8; Joel iii. 17; Ezek. xxxvii. 21–27; Zeph. iii. 13).

[1] It is exactly thus that in the Mohammedan theology the good angels are compact of *light*, and the evil ones of *fire*.

[2] Calvin: 'It is a notable consolation that the sons of God who now either lie covered with squalor, or are unnoticed and in small esteem, or even are overwhelmed with insults, shall then, as if in a clear sky from which all clouds have been chased away, once for all shine forth in true and conspicuous splendour. The Son of God shall raise his own aloft, and shall wipe from them every defilement by which now their brightness is concealed.'—It is the saying of a Jewish expositor of Ps. lxxii.: 'As the sun and moon are the lights of this world, even so shall it come to pass that the just shall be the lights of the world to come.'

PARABLE III.

THE MUSTARD-SEED.

Matt. xiii. 31, 32; Mark iv. 30–32; Luke xiii. 18, 19.

The four parables which follow group themselves into two pairs. Those of the Mustard-seed and the Leaven constitute the first pair, and might seem, at first sight, merely repetitions of the same truth; but in this, as in every other case, upon nearer inspection essential differences reveal themselves. They have indeed this much in common, that they both describe the small and slight beginnings, the gradual progress, and the final marvellous increase of the Church—or how, to use another image, the stone cut out without hands should become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth (Dan. ii. 34, 35; cf. Ezek. xlvii. 1–5). But each also has much which is its own. That other has to do with the kingdom of God which 'cometh not with observation;' this with that same kingdom as it displays itself openly, and cannot be hid. That declares the *intensive*, this the *extensive*, development of the Gospel. That sets forth the power and action of the truth on the world brought in contact with it; this the power of the truth to develop itself from within; as the tree which, shut up within the seed, will unfold itself according to the law of its own being.

Chrysostom[1] traces finely the connexion between this

[1] So also Lyser, with more immediate reference to the question with which the parable is introduced in St. Mark (iv. 30): 'Since the condition of the gospel is such that so many things hinder its fruit, and it is exposed to such manifold assaults of Satan that hardly may any fruit be

parable and those which have just gone before. From that of the Sower the disciples may have gathered that of the seed which they should sow three parts would perish, and only a fourth part prosper; while that of the Tares had opened to them the prospect of further hindrances which would beset even that portion which had taken root downward, and sprung upward; now then, lest they should be tempted quite to lose heart and to despair, these two parables are spoken for their encouragement. 'My kingdom,' the Lord would say, 'shall survive these losses, and surmount these hindrances, until, small as its first beginnings may appear, it shall, like a mighty tree, fill the earth with its branches,—like potent leaven, diffuse its influence through all the world.' The growth of a mighty kingdom is not here for the first time likened to that of a tree. Many of our Lord's hearers must have been familiar with such a comparison from the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The upcoming of a worldly kingdom had been set forth under this image (Dan. iv. 10–12; Ezek. xxxi. 3–9 [1]), that also of the kingdom of God (Ezek. xvii. 22–24; Ps. lxxx. 8 [2]).

But why, it may be asked, among all trees is a *mustard-tree* [3] chosen here? Many nobler plants, as the vine, or

looked for, what shall we say of it? Will it be possible to find aught in nature which may excuse its weakness, and vindicate it from contempt?'

[1] See Hävernick, *Comm. üb. Daniel*, p. 139.

[2] In a striking poem, found in the Appendix to Fell's *Cyprian*, and quoted in my *Sacred Latin Poetry*, p. 200, 3rd edit., the growth of the kingdom of God, under the figure of the growth of a tree, is beautifully set forth.

[3] Some modern inquirers recognize in the mustard-tree of this parable not that which goes by this name in Western Europe, but the Salvadora Persica, commonly called in Syria now khardal. So Dr. Lindley, in his *Flora Indica*; and see in the *Athenæum* of March 23, 1844, an interesting paper by Dr. Royle, read before the Royal Asiatic Society. Captains Irby and Mangles, describing this khardal, say: 'It has a pleasant, though a strong aromatic taste, exactly resembling mustard, and if taken in any quantity, produces a similar irritability of the nose and eyes.' There is, on the other hand, a learned discussion in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, June, 1844, calling in question Dr. Royle's conclusion; from which also

taller trees, as the cedar (1 Kin. iv. 33; Ezek. xvii. 3), might have been named. Doubtless this is chosen, not with reference to greatness which it obtains in the end, for in this many surpass it, but to the proportion between the smallness of the seed and the greatness of the tree which unfolds itself therefrom. For this is the point to which the Lord calls especial attention,—not the greatness of the mustard-tree in itself, but its greatness as compared with the seed from whence it springs; for what He would fain teach his disciples was not that his kingdom should be glorious, but that it should be glorious despite its weak and slight and despised beginnings. And the comparison had in other ways its fitness too. The mustard-seed, minute and trivial as it might seem, was not without its significance and acknowledged worth in antiquity. It ranked among the nobler Pythagorean symbols; was esteemed to possess medicinal virtues against the bites of venomous creatures and against poisons, and used as a remedy in many diseases.[1] Nor can I, with a modern interpreter, account very ridiculous the suggestion that the Saviour chose this seed on account of further qualities possessed by it, which gave it a peculiar aptness to illustrate the truth which He

the author of a careful article in the *Dict. of the Bible* dissents; see also Tristram, *Natural History of the Bible*. p. 472.

[1] Pliny, *H. N.* xx. 87. Sinapis scelerata Plautus calls it, for its pungent qualities; and Columella, Seque lacessenti fletum factura sinapis, 'Mustard that to its challenger brings tears.' This, too, may make part of its fitness here: for as little is the Gospel all sweets, being compared by Clement of Alexandria to the mustard-seed, 'that biteth the soul for its profit.' And in the Homily of an uncertain author: 'Like as when we take a grain of mustard, our face is pained, our brow contracts, we are moved to tears, and receive even that which brings health to our body not without weeping for its harshness . . . so also, when we accept the commands of the Christian faith, our mind is pained, our body is distressed, we are moved to tears, and attain to our very salvation not without lamentation and grief.' This its active energy makes it as apt an emblem of the good as the ill: and thus when Darius, according to Eastern tradition, sent Alexander the Great a barrel of sesame, to acquaint him with the multitude of his soldiers, Alexander sent a bag of mustard-seed in return, to indicate the active, fiery, biting courage of his (D'Herbelot, *Biblioth. Orient.* s. v. Escander).

had in hand. Its heat, its fiery vigour, the fact that only through being bruised it gives out its best virtues, and all this under so insignificant an appearance and in so small a compass, may well have moved Him to select this seed by which to set forth the destinies of that word of the kingdom, that doctrine of a crucified Redeemer, which, to the Greeks foolishness, and to the Jews a stumbling-block, should prove to them that believed 'the power of God unto salvation.' [1]

But not Christ's doctrine merely, nor yet even the Church which He planted upon earth, is this grain of mustard-seed in its central meaning. He is Himself at once the mustard-seed [2] and the Man that sowed it. He is the mustard-seed, for the Church was originally enclosed in Him, and unfolded itself from Him, having as much oneness of life with Him as the tree with the seed in which its rudiments were all enclosed, and out of which it grew; and the Sower, in that by a free act of his own, He gave *Himself* to that death whereby He became the Author of life unto many; [3] as Himself has said, 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit' (John xii. 24). And the field in which He sowed this seed

[1] Thus the author of a sermon on the martyrdom of St. Lawrence, ascribed to Augustine (*Serm.* 87, *Appendix*), and to Ambrose: 'Like as a grain of mustard at first sight seems but a little thing, both common and despised, giving no savour, shedding no odour, indicating no sweetness; but, as soon as it is bruised, straightway it sheds its odour, manifests its sharpness, exhales a condiment of fiery savour, and is inflamed with such burning heat that it seems a marvel how so much fire was shut up in such trifling grains: . . . so also at first sight the Christian faith seems but a little thing, both common and insignificant, not showing its power, exhibiting no pride, affording no grace.' Ambrose has much instructive, with something merely fanciful, on this parable (*Exp. in Luc.* vii. 176–186).

[2] See a fragment of Irenæus (p. 347, Bened. ed.), who also notes how the mustard-seed was selected for its fiery and austere qualities (τὸ πυβδακὲς καὶ αὐστηρόν). So Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* iv. 30.

[3] Early Christian art had a true insight into this. Didron (*Iconographie Chrétienne*, p. 208) describes this as a frequent symbol. 'Christ in the tomb; from his mouth proceeds a tree on the branches whereof are the apostles.'

was the world;—'*his field*,' or as St. Luke expresses it (xiii. 19), '*his* garden;' for the world was made by Him, and coming to it, 'He came unto his own.'

This seed, when cast into the ground, is '*the least of all seeds*,'—words which have often perplexed interpreters, many seeds, as of poppy or rue, being smaller. Yet difficulties of this kind are not worth making; it is sufficient to know that 'small as a grain of mustard-seed' was a proverbial expression among the Jews[1] for something exceedingly minute (see Luke xvii. 6). The Lord, in his popular teaching, adhered to the popular language. And as the mustard-seed, so has been his kingdom. What, to the eye of flesh, could be less magnificent, what could have less of promise, than the commencements of that kingdom in his own person? Growing up in a distant and despised province, till his thirtieth year He did not emerge from the bosom of his family; then taught for two or three years in the neighbouring towns and villages, and occasionally at Jerusalem; made a few converts, chiefly among the poor and unlearned; and at length, falling into the hands of his enemies, with no attempt at resistance on his own part or that of his followers, died a malefactor's death upon the cross. Such, and so slight, was the commencement of the universal kingdom of God; for herein that kingdom differs from the great schemes of this world; these last have a proud beginning, a shameful and miserable end—towers as of Babel, which at first threaten to be as high as heaven, but end a deserted misshapen heap of slime and bricks; while the works of God, and most of all his chief work, his Church, have a slight and unobserved beginning, with gradual increase, and a glorious consummation. So is it with his kingdom in the world, a kingdom which came not with observation; so is it with his kingdom in any single heart: there too the word of Christ falls like a slight mustard-seed, seeming to promise

[1] So also in the Coran (*Sur.* 31): 'Oh my son, verily every matter, whether good or bad, though it be of the weight of a grain of mustard-seed, and be hidden in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, God will bring the same to light.'

little, but effecting, if allowed to grow, mighty and marvellous results.[1] For that seed which was the smallest of all seeds, '*when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof*' (Isai. xviii. 6). There is no exaggeration here. In hot countries, as in Judæa, the mustard-tree attains a size of which we do not so much as dream in our colder latitudes, sometimes such as will allow a man to climb up into its branches (this, however, was counted worth recording),[2] or to ride on horseback under them, as a traveller in Chili mentions that he has done. Maldonatus assures us, that in Spain he has seen large ovens heated with its branches ; often, too, he has noted when the seed was ripening, immense flocks of birds congregating upon the boughs, which yet were strong enough to sustain the weight without being broken. All this was probably familiar to our Lord's hearers as well, and presented a lively image to their minds. They, too, had beheld the birds of the air coming and lodging in the branches of the mustard-tree, and finding at once their food and their shelter there.

There is prophecy too in these words. As in that grand announcement of the kingdom of God (Ezek. xvii. 22–24) which has so many points of contact and resemblance with this parable,[3] it is said of the tender twig which the Lord

[1] Jerome (*Comm. in Matt.* in loc.) brings out this difference well. 'The preaching of the Gospel is the least among all systems of teaching. For at the first doctrine it produces no confidence in its truth, preaching the Godhead of a man, the death of God and the offence of the cross. Compare a doctrine of this kind with the dogmas of the philosophers, with their books, their splendid eloquence, and the style of their discourses, and you will see by how much the seed of the Gospel is less than all other seeds. But when these are grown they prove nothing that is penetrating, nothing vigorous, nothing vital, but all is flaccid and rotten, and the effeminate growth produces only poor garden stuff and herbs which quickly wither and waste. This preaching, on the other hand, which at the outset seemed so small, when it has been sown either in the mind of a believer or in the world at large, springs up into no poor garden stuff, but grows into a tree.'

[2] Lightfoot, *Hor. Heb.* in loc.

[3] See Hengstenberg, *Christologie*, vol. ii. p. 556, 2nd edit.

shall plant, 'it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell;' and as these last words announce there the refuge and defence which men shall find in the Church of God (cf. Ezek. xxxi. 6, 12), so must they have the same meaning here. Christ's kingdom shall attract multitudes by the shelter and protection which it offers; shelter, as it has often proved, from worldly oppression, shelter from the great power of the devil. Itself a tree of life whose leaves are for medicine and whose fruit for food (Ezek. xlvii. 12; Rev. xxii. 2), all who need the healing of their soul's hurts, all who need the satisfying of their soul's hunger,[1] shall betake themselves to it; and all who do so shall be enabled to set their seal to the words of the Son of Sirach (xiv. 20, 26, 27), 'Blessed is the man that doth meditate good things in Wisdom. . . . He shall set his children under her shelter, and shall lodge under her branches; by her he shall be covered from heat, and in her glory shall he dwell.'[2]

[1] By '*the fowls of the air*' [τοῦ οὐρανοῦ] Gregory of Nyssa (*Hexaëm. Proëm.*) finely understands 'the souls that soar aloft and wander on high.'

[2] Augustine (*Serm.* xliv. 2): 'The Church has grown, the nations have believed, the princes of the earth have been conquered in the name of Christ, to become conquerors in all the world. Once men took vengeance on Christians before idols, now they take vengeance on idols for the sake of Christ. All seek the help of the Church, in every affliction, in all their trials. That grain of mustard-seed has grown, and there come to it the birds of the air, the proud men of the world, and rest beneath its branches.'

PARABLE IV.

THE LEAVEN.

MATTHEW xiii. 33; LUKE xiii. 20, 21.

'*ANOTHER parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.*' This parable relates also to the marvellous increase of the kingdom of God; but, while the last set forth its outward visible manifestation, this declares its hidden working, its mysterious influence on that world which on all sides it touches. The mustard-seed does not for some while attract observation; nor, until it has grown to some height, do the birds of the air light upon its branches; but the leaven has been actively working from the first moment that it was hidden in the lump. Here, indeed, we are met at the outset by Gurtler,[1] Teelman,[2] and some little bands of modern separatists,[3] who altogether deny that the parable has anything to do with the glorious developments of the kingdom of God. They take it rather as a prophecy of the heresies and corruptions which should mingle with and adulterate the pure doctrine of the Gospel,—of the workings, in fact, of the future mystery of

[1] *Syst. Theol. Prophet.* p. 590.

[2] *Comm. in Luc.* xvi. p. 59, seq.—Vitringa gives, with great impartiality, two alternative expositions of the parable, taking first the leaven in a good, then in an evil sense, but decides absolutely for neither.

[3] *Brief Exposition of Matthew* xiii., by J. N. Darby, 1845, p. 40. He makes, in the same way, the parable of the mustard-seed to be a prophecy of the upgrowth of a proud world-hierarchy.

iniquity. The woman that hides the leaven in the meal is for them the apostate Church; which, with its ministers, they observe, is often represented under this image (Prov. ix. 13; Rev. xvii. 1; Zech. v. 7–11). The argument on which they mainly rely in support of this interpretation is, of course, the fact that leaven is oftenest employed in the Scripture as the symbol of something corrupt and corrupting (1 Cor. v. 7; Luke xii. 1; Gal. v. 9). This is undoubtedly true. As such it was forbidden in the offerings under the Law (Exod. xiii. 3; Lev. ii. 11; Amos iv. 5), though not without an exception (Lev. xxiii. 17). The strict command to the children of Israel, that they should carefully put away every particle of leaven out of their houses during the Passover week, rests on this view of it as evil; they were thus reminded that if they would rightly keep the feast, they must seek to cleanse their hearts from all workings of malice and wickedness.[1] But conceding all upon which they rest their argument, it would still be impossible to accept their interpretation as the true. The parable, as the Lord declares, is concerning '*the kingdom of heaven*;' it would in that case be a parable

[1] See our Collect for the First Sunday after Easter.—The Jews termed the figmentum malum, that in man 'which lusteth against the spirit,' and hinders him from doing the things that he would, 'the leaven in the lump;' and the reason is given in the book Sohar: 'Evil concupiscence is called leaven because a little of it permeates the heart and swells to such a size as to split the breast' (see Schoettgen, *Hor. Heb.* vol. i. p. 597). The Romans had the same dislike to the use of leaven in sacred things; 'It is not lawful for a priest of Jove to touch meal tainted with leaven' (Gell. x. 15, 19); Plutarch (*Quæst. Rom.* 109) giving no doubt the true explanation: 'The leaven itself is born from corruption, and corrupts the mass with which it is mingled.' Thus it comes to pass that ἄρτοι καθαροί is used as = ἄζυμοι. So Jerome (*Ep.* 31) gives the reason why honey was forbidden in the Levitical offerings (Lev. ii. 11): 'For with God nothing voluptuous, nothing that is merely sweet is approved, but only that which has in it something of pungent truth.' It was the feeling of the unsuitableness of leaven in things sacred which, in part, caused the Latin Church to contend so earnestly against the use of fermented bread in the Eucharist, calling those who used it fermentarii, though an historical interest also mingled in the question (see Augusti, *Handb. d. Christl. Archäol.* vol. ii. p. 662).

concerning another kingdom altogether. Announcing that there was one who should leaven through and through with a leaven of falsehood and corruption the entire kingdom of heaven, He would have announced that the gates of hell *should* prevail against it; He would have written failure upon his whole future work; there would, in that case, have remained no re-active energy, by which it could have ever been unleavened again.

But the admitted fact that leaven is, in Scripture, most commonly the type of what is false and corrupting, need not drive us to any interpretation encumbered with embarrassments like these. It was not, therefore, the less free to use it in a good sense. In those other passages, the puffing up, disturbing, souring properties of leaven constituted the prominent points of comparison; in the present, its warmth,[1] its penetrative energy, the way in which a little of it lends a savour and virtue to much wherewith it is brought in contact. The figurative language of Scripture is not so stereotyped, that one figure must always stand for one and the same thing. The devil is 'a roaring *lion*, seeking whom he may devour' (1 Pet. v. 8); yet this does not hinder the same title from being applied to Christ, 'the *Lion* of the tribe of Juda' (Rev. v. 5); only there the subtlety and fierceness of the animal formed the point of comparison, here the nobility and kingliness and conquering strength.[2] The silliness of the dove is in one place the point of comparison (Hos. vii. 11), its simplicity at another (Matt. x. 16). St. Cyril[3] then could scarcely have had this parable in his mind, when he said: 'Leaven, in the inspired writings, is *always* taken as the type of naughtiness and sin.' Ignatius shows rather by his own

[1] Ζύμη from ζέω, as fermentum (= fervimentum) from ferveo: leaven (in French, levain) from levare, to lift up.

[2] See Augustine (*Serm.* lxxiii. 2): 'How vast is the difference betwixt Christ and the devil! Yet Christ is called a lion, so also is the devil. . . . The one a lion on account of his bravery, the other a lion on account of his ferocity. The one a lion for that He conquers, the other a lion for that he injures.' Cf. *Serm.* xxxii. 6.

[3] *Hom. Paschal.* 19.

application of the image, how it may be freely used, now in a good, now in a bad sense; for, warning against judaizing practices, he writes: 'Lay aside the evil leaven which has grown old and maketh sour, and be transmuted into the new leaven, which is Christ Jesus.'[1] Nor is it to be forgotten that if, on one side, the operation of leaven upon meal presents an analogy to something evil in the spiritual world, it does also on the other to something good; its effects on bread being to render it more tasteful, more nourishing, lighter, and generally more wholesome.

We need not then hesitate to take the parable in its obvious sense,—that it prophesies the diffusion, and not the corruptions, of the Gospel. By the leaven we are to understand the word of the kingdom, which Word, in its highest sense, Christ Himself was. As the mustard-seed, out of which a mighty tree should unfold itself, was '*the least of all seeds*,' so too the leaven is something apparently of slight account, but at the same time mighty in operation; in this fitly setting forth Him, of whom it was said, 'He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him;' but then presently again, 'By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; . . . and he shall divide the spoil with the strong' (Isai. liii. 2, 11, 12); and who, when He had communicated of his life and spirit to his Apostles, enabled them too, in their turn, poor and mean and unlearned as they were, to become 'the salt of the earth,' the leaven of the world. For, in Chrysostom's words, 'that which is once leavened becomes leaven to the rest; since as the spark when it takes hold of wood, makes that which is already kindled to transmit the flame, and so seizes still upon more, thus it is also with the preaching of the word.'[2]

[1] *Ad Magnes.* 10. Cf. Gregory Nazianzene (*Orat.* xxxvi. 90), who says that Christ by his Incarnation sanctified men, 'like leaven working throughout the dough, and uniting it to itself.'

[2] *In Matt. Hom.* 46; see also *Con. Ignaviam, Hom.* iii. 2. So Cajetan: 'The disciples of Christ, the first members of the kingdom of heaven,

Is it part of the natural machinery of the parable, the act of kneading being proper to women (Gen. xviii. 6; 1 Sam. xxviii. 24), that it should be '*a woman*' who hides the leaven in the three measures of meal? or shall we look for something more in it than this? A comparison with Luke xv. 8 (*the woman* who loses, and then seeks and finds, her piece of money) may suggest that the divine Wisdom (Prov. ix. 1-3), the Holy Spirit, which is the sanctifying power in humanity (and it is of that sanctifying that the word is here), may be intended. But if it be asked, Why represented as a woman? to this it may be replied, that the organ of the Spirit's working is the Church, which evidently would be most fitly represented under this image. In and through the Church the Spirit's work proceeds: only as the Spirit dwells in the Church (Rev. xxii. 17), is that able to mingle a nobler element in the mass of humanity, to leaven the world. So again, why should '*three*' measures of meal be mentioned? It might be enough to answer, because it was just so much as would be often kneaded at one time (Gen. xviii. 6; Judg. vi. 19; 1 Sam. i. 24[1]). Yet the '*three*' may intend something more, may prophesy of the spread of the Gospel through the three parts then known of the world; or, as Augustine will have it, of the ultimate leavening of the whole human race, derived from the three sons of Noah; which amounts to much the same thing. And those who, like Jerome and Ambrose, find in it a pledge of the sanctification of spirit, soul, and body (1 Thess. v. 23) are not upon a different track, if, as has not been ill suggested, Shem, Japheth, and Ham, do indeed answer to these three elements, spirit, soul, and body, which together make

penetrated with their spirit the hearts of men, and nurtured their crudity and acerbity to the ripeness and savour of the heavenly life.'

[1] In the two last places the Septuagint has τρία μέτρα. For the Gnostic perversion of this parable, these 'three measures' being severally men χοϊκοί (1 Cor. xv. 47), ψυχικοί (1 Cor. ii. 14), and πνευματικοί (Gal. vi. 1), see Irenæus, *Con. Hær.* i. 8. 3. It furnishes a notable illustration of what has been said already (see p. 43) on the manner in which the Gnostics dealt with the parables.

up the man—the one or other element having, as is plainly the case, predominance in the descendants severally of the three.

But the leaven which is thus mingled with the lump, which acts on and coalesces with it, is at the same time different from it; for the woman *took* it from elsewhere to mingle it therein: and even such is the Gospel, a kingdom not of this world (John xviii. 36), not the unfolding of any powers which already existed therein, a kingdom not rising, as the secular kingdoms, 'out of the earth' (Dan. vii. 17), but a new power brought into the world from above; not a philosophy which men have imagined, but a Revelation which God has revealed. The Gospel of Christ was a new and quickening power cast into the midst of an old and dying world, a centre of life round which all the moral energies which still survived, and all which itself should awaken, might form and gather;—by the help of which the world might constitute itself anew.[1] This leaven is not merely mingled with, but *hidden* in the mass which it renewed. For the true renovation, that which God effects, is ever thus from the inward to the outward; it begins in the inner spiritual world, though it does not end there: for it fails not to bring about, in good time, a mighty change also in the

[1] Augustine, in whose time the fading away of all the glory of the ancient world was daily becoming more apparent ('The world is so wasted with all this destruction that it has lost even the appearance of seductiveness'), delighted to contemplate and to present the coming of Christ under this aspect. Thus *Serm.* lxxxi.: 'Was it a small thing that God did for thee, whereas in the old age of the world He sent unto thee Christ to refresh thee at the time when all things are failing? . . . Christ came when all things were growing old, and made thee new. That which was made, that which was established, that which was doomed to perish, was already on the brink of destruction. Need was that it should abound in labours; but He came, and brought thee consolation amid labours, and the promise of eternal rest. Be it far from thee then to wish to cleave to the outworn world, and to be unwilling to be restored to youth in Christ, Who says to thee: The world perishes, the world grows old, the world is failing, it labours with the difficult breathing of old age. Let fear be far from thee, thy youth shall be renewed as the youth of an eagle.'

outward and visible world. This was wonderfully exemplified in the early history of Christianity. The leaven was effectually hidden. How striking is the entire ignorance which heathen writers betray of all that was going forward a little below the surface of society,—the manner in which they overlooked the mighty change which was preparing; and this, not merely at the first, when the mustard-tree might well escape notice, but, with slight exceptions, even up to the very moment when the open triumph of Christianity was at hand. Working from the centre to the circumference, by degrees it made itself felt, till at length the whole Græco-Roman world was, more or less, leavened by it. Nor must we forget that the mere external conversion of that whole world gives us a very inadequate measure of the work which needed to be done: besides this, there was the eradication of the innumerable heathen practices and customs and feelings which had enwoven and entwined their fibres round the very heart of society; a work which lagged very far behind the other, and which, in fact, was never thoroughly accomplished till the whole structure of that society had gone to pieces, and the new Teutonic framework had been erected in its room.[1]

But while much has thus been effected, while the leavening of the mass has never ceased to go forward, yet the promise of the parable has hitherto been realized only in a very imperfect measure; nor can we consider these words, '*till the whole was leavened*,' as less than a prophecy of a final complete triumph of the Gospel—that it will diffuse itself through all nations, and purify and ennoble all life. We may also fairly see in these words a pledge and assurance that the word of life, received into any single heart, shall not there cease its effectual working, till it has brought the whole man into obedience to it, sanctifying him wholly, so that he shall be altogether a new creation in Christ Jesus.[2]

[1] On this subject there is much which is admirable in Tzschirner's *Fall des Heidenthums*, 1829.

[2] Corn. a Lapide quotes from an earlier commentator: 'He says,

It shall claim every region of man's being as its own, and make its presence felt through all. In fact the parable does nothing less than set forth to us the mystery of regeneration, both in its first act, which can be but once, as the leaven is but once hidden: and also in the consequent renewal by the Holy Spirit, which, as the further working of the leaven, is continual and progressive. This side of the truth is that exclusively brought out by Hammond, who thus paraphrases our Lord's words: 'The Gospel hath such a secret invisible influence on the hearts of men, to change them and affect them, and all the actions that flow from them, that it is fitly resembled to leaven, so mixed thoroughly with the whole, that although it appeareth not in any part of it visibly, yet every part hath a tincture from it.' We may fitly conclude, in the words of St. Ambrose: 'May the Holy Church, which is figured under the type of this woman in the Gospel, whose meal are we, hide the Lord Jesus in the innermost places of our hearts, till the warmth of the Divine wisdom penetrate into the most secret recesses of our souls.'[1]

Until the whole was leavened, because the charity hidden in our mind must continue to grow to the end that it may change the whole mind unto its own perfection, for here indeed a beginning is made, but perfection is reached in the future.'

[1] *Exp. in Luc.* vii. 187.—Clement of Alexandria (p. 694, Potter's ed.) gives an admirable exposition of the parable, and in very few words. The kingdom of heaven, he says, is likened to leaven, 'because the strength of the word by virtue of its directness and power, in the case of every one who receives and possesses it within himself, secretly and invisibly draws him to itself and brings his whole nature into unity.' On this parable and that preceding Godet writes: 'These two parables form the most complete contrast to the picture created by the Jewish imagination of the establishment of the Messiah's reign. All was to be effected instantaneously by the stroke of a magic wand. Jesus opposes to this superficial notion the idea of a moral development, which, working by spiritual means and recognizing the existence of liberty, is consequently slow and progressive. How is it possible to admit in the face of such words that He believed in the imminence of his return?'

PARABLE V.

THE HID TREASURE.

MATTHEW xiii. 44.

THE kingdom of God is not merely a general, it is also an individual and personal, thing. It is not merely a tree overshadowing the earth, or leaven leavening the world, but each man must have it for himself, and make it his own by a distinct act of his own will. He cannot be a Christian without knowing it. He may indeed come under the shadow of this great tree, and partake of many blessings of its shelter; he may dwell in a Christendom which has been leavened with the leaven of the truth, and so in a degree himself share in the universal leavening. But more than this is needed, and more than this for every elect soul will find place. There will be a personal appropriation of the benefit; and we have the history of this in these two parables[1] which follow. They were spoken, not to the multitude, not to those 'without,' but in the house (ver. 36), and to the inner circle of disciples; who are addressed as having lighted on the hid treasure, having found the pearl of price; and are now warned of the surpassing worth of these, and that, for their sakes, all which would hinder from making them securely their own, must be joyfully renounced.[2]

[1] Origen (*Comm. in Matt.*) observes that these would more fitly be called *similitudes* (ὁμοιώσεις) than parables, which name, he says, is not given to them in the Scripture: yet see ver. 53.—For a series of these briefer parables as in use among the Jews, see Schoettgen, *Hor. Heb.* vol. i. pp. 83–85.

[2] Jackson (*Eternal Truth of Scriptures*, iv. 8. 5): 'After we come once to view the seam or vein wherein this hidden treasure lies, if we be

The second parable repeats what the first has said, but repeats it with a difference; they are each the complement of the other: so that under one or other, as finders either of the pearl or of the hid treasure, may be ranged all who become partakers of the blessings of the Gospel of Christ. Of these there are some who feel that there must be an absolute good for man, in the possessing of which he shall be blessed and find the satisfaction of all his longings; who are therefore seeking everywhere and inquiring for this good. Such are likened to the merchant that has distinctly set before himself the purpose of seeking goodly pearls, and making these his own. Such are the fewer in number, but are likely to prove the noblest servants of the truth. There are others, who do not discover that there is an aim and a purpose for man's life, or a truth for him at all, until the truth as it is in Jesus is revealed to them. Such are compared to the finder of the hid treasure, who stumbled upon it unawares, neither expecting nor looking for it. While the others felt that there was a good, and were looking for it, the discovery of the good itself for the first time reveals to these that there is such at all; whose joy, therefore, as greater,—being the joy at the discovery of an unlooked-for treasure,—is expressed: that of the others, not. Thus Hammond, bringing out this distinction, paraphrases the two parables thus: 'The Gospel being by some not looked after, is yet sometimes met with by them, and becomes matter of infinite joy and desire to them: and so is likened fitly to a treasure, which a man finding casually in a field, hid again, or concealed it, and then, designing to get into his possession, accounts no price he can pay too dear for it. Others there are which have followed the study of wisdom, and thirsted after some instruction: and

merchantly minded, and not of peddling dispositions, we account all we possess besides as dross, or (as the Apostle speaks) dung, in respect of our proffered title to it; for whose further assurance we alienate all our interest in the world, the flesh, with all their appurtenances, with as great willingness as good husbands do base tenements or hard-rented leases, to compass some goodly royalty offered them more than half for nothing.'

then the Gospel of Christ comes as a rich prize doth to a merchant, who is in pursuit of rich merchandize, and meeting with a jewel for his turn, lays out all his estate upon it.'

The cases of Jew and Gentile will respectively exemplify the contrast between the Pearl and the Hid Treasure; though in the case of the Jews, or the larger number of them, the illustration cannot be carried through, as they, though seeking pearls, having a zeal for righteousness, yet, when the pearl of great price was offered to them, were not willing to '*sell all*,' to renounce their peculiar privileges, their self-righteousness, and all else which they held dear, that they might buy their pearl. The Gentiles, on the contrary, came upon the treasure unawares. Christ was found of them that sought Him not, and the blessings of his truth revealed to them who before had not divined that there were such blessings for man (Rom. ix. 30).[1] Or, again, we might instance Nathanael as an example of the more receptive nature, of one who has the truth found for him; or a still more striking example,—the Samaritan woman (John iv.), who, when she came on that memorable day to draw water from the well, anticipated anything rather than lighting on the hid treasure. Yet in this character there cannot be a total absence of a seeking for the truth; only it is a desire that has hitherto slumbered in the soul, and displays itself rather as a love of the truth when revealed, and at once a joyful and submissive acquiescence to

[1] Grotius: 'The teaching of the Gospel shone upon some who were taking no thought either of God, or of amendment of life, or of the hope of another life, such as were many in the nations of the Gentiles, to whom Paul applies the prophecy: I am found of those that do not seek me. There were also among the Jews and elsewhere those who sought after wisdom, who were moved with a desire for learning the truth, or who were eagerly awaiting some Prophet or even the Messiah Himself. The comparison of the treasure refers to the former class, that of the pearl of great price to the latter.' Bengel recognizes the same distinction: 'The discovery of the treasure does not presuppose an act of search in the same way as does that of the pearls which are discovered by diligent inquiry.' Alex. Knox (*Remains*, vol. i. p. 416, seq.) has very excellent remarks to the same effect.

it, than in any active previous quest. In both, there must be the same willingness to embrace it when known, and to hold it fast, at whatever costs and hazards. On the other hand, we have, perhaps, no such record of a noble nature, seeking for the pearl of price, and not resting till he had found it, as that which Augustine gives of himself in his *Confessions*; though others are not wanting, such as Justin Martyr's account of his own conversion, given in his first dialogue with Trypho, in which he tells how he had travelled through the whole circle of Greek philosophy, seeking everywhere for that which would satisfy the deepest needs of his soul, and ever seeking in vain, till he found it at length in the Gospel of Christ. We derive a further confirmation of this view of the parables, and that it is not a mere fancy, from the forms which they severally assume. In this the treasure is the prominent circumstance; '*The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure.*' Now if the other had been cast in exactly the same mould, it would have been said, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a pearl;' the words, however, run not so; but rather, '*The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man;*' so that the person seeking is in that parable at the centre of the spiritual picture, the thing found, in this. The difference is scarcely accidental.

The circumstance which supplies the groundwork of this first parable, namely, the finding of a concealed treasure,[1] is of much more frequent occurrence in an insecure state of society, such as in almost all ages has prevailed in the East, than happily it can be with us. A writer on Oriental literature and customs mentions that in the East, on account of the frequent changes of dynasties, and the revolutions which accompany them, many rich men divide their goods into

[1] Θησαυρος, *i.e.* συναγωγὴ χρημάτων κεκρυμμένη, 'a hidden store of goods,' as an old Lexicon explains it. On the derivation of the word, and its possible relation to αὖρον = aurum, see Pott, *Etym. Forsch.* vol. ii. pt. iv. p. 334.—The Jurisconsult Paulus gives its legal definition: 'A treasure is a hoard of money buried so long ago that no memory of it survives, and it has now no owner

three parts: one they employ in commerce, or for their necessary support; one they turn into jewels, which, should it prove needful to fly, could be easily carried with them; a third part they bury.[1] But as they trust no one with the place where the treasure is buried, so is the same, should they not return to the spot before their death, as good as lost to the living[2] (Jer. xli. 8), until, by chance, a lucky peasant digging in his field, lights upon it.[3] And thus, when we read in Eastern tales, how a man has found a buried treasure, and, in a moment, risen from poverty to great riches, this is, in fact, no strange or rare occurrence, but a natural consequence of the customs of these people.[4] Modern books of travels bear witness to the almost universal belief in the existence of such hid treasures; so that the traveller often finds much difficulty in obtaining information about antiquities, is sometimes seriously inconvenienced, or even endangered, in his researches among ancient ruins, by the jealousy of the neighbouring inhabitants, who are persuaded that he is coming to carry away concealed hoards of wealth from among them, of which, by some means or other, he has got notice. And so also the skill of an Eastern magician in great part consists in being able to detect the places where these secreted treasures will successfully be looked for.[5] Often, too, a man abandoning the regular pursuits of industry will devote himself to treasure-seeking, in the hope of growing, through some happy chance, rich of a sudden (Job iii. 21; Prov. ii. 4). The contrast, however, between this parable and the following, noticed already, will not allow us to assume the finder here to have been in search of the trea-

[1] Compare Virgil, *Georg.* ii. 507; *Æn.* vi. 610.

[2] Gregory of Nyssa (*Orat. con. Usurar.* vol. ii. p. 233, Paris, 1638) has a curious story of an avaricious and wealthy usurer of his day, all whose property was thus lost to his family.

[3] The *Aulularia* of Plautus, *Prolog.* 6–12, turns on such an incident.

[4] Richardson (*Dissert. on the Languages, &c., of Eastern Nations*, p. 180). Compare the strange story told by Tacitus, *Annal.* xvi. 1–3.

[5] See Burder, *Oriental Literature*, vol. i. p. 275; and for evidence of the same in old time, Becker, *Charicles*, vol. i. p. 224.

sure ; he rather stumbles upon it, strikes it with plough or spade, unawares, and thinking of no such thing : [1] probably while engaged as a hireling in cultivating the field of another.

Some draw a distinction between '*the field*' and '*the treasure.*' The first is the Holy Scriptures ; the second, the hidden mystery of the knowledge of Christ contained in them,[2] which when a man has partly perceived,—discovered, that is, and got a glimpse of the treasure,—he is willing to renounce all meaner aims and objects ; that, having leisure to search more and more into those Scriptures, to make them his own, he may enrich himself for ever with the knowledge of Christ which therein is contained.[3] Yet to me '*the field*' rather represents the outer visible Church, as contradistinguished from the inward spiritual, with which '*the treasure*' will then agree. As the man who before looked on the field with careless eyes, prized it but as another field, now sees in it a new worth, resolves that nothing shall separate him from it, so he who recognizes the Church, not as a human institute, but a divine, as a dispenser, not of earthly gifts, but of heavenly,—who has learned that God is in the midst of it,—sees now that it is something different from, and something more than, all earthly societies, with which hitherto he has confounded it : and henceforth it is precious in his sight, even to its outermost skirts, for the sake of that inward glory which

[1] Horace (*Sat.* i. 1. 42) : O si urnam argenti *fors qua mihi monstret !* 'Oh ! if some chance will show me an urn full of silver.' Persius : O si Sub rastro crepet argenti mihi seria ! 'Oh ! if a pot of silver will chink beneath my plough.'

[2] So Jerome (*Comm. in Matt.* in loc.) : 'That treasure . . . is the holy Scriptures in which is stored up the knowledge of the Saviour ;' and Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.* i. qu. 13) : 'By the treasure hidden away in a field, He meant the two Testaments of the Law in the Church, which when a man has touched on his intellectual side he perceives that great things are there hid, and goes and sells all that he has and buys that field ; that is, by contempt of things temporal he procures for himself leisure, that he may become rich by the knowledge of God.'

[3] Origen's view in a striking passage, *De Prin.* iv. 23, namely, that '*the field*' is the letter, and '*the hid treasure*' the spiritual or allegorical meaning, underlying this letter, is only a modification of the same.

is revealed to his eyes. And he sees, too, that blessedness is unalterably linked to communion with it. As the man cannot have the treasure and leave the field, but both or neither must be his, so he cannot have Christ except in his Church and in the ordinances of his Church; none but the golden pipes of the sanctuary are used for the conveyance of the golden oil (Zech. iv. 12); he cannot have Christ in his heart, and, at the same time, separate his fortunes from those of Christ's struggling, suffering, warring Church. The treasure and the field go together; both, or neither, must be his.

This treasure '*when a man hath found, he hideth*;' having laid it open in discovering, he covers it up again, while he goes and effects the purchase of the field. This cannot mean that he who has discovered the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in Christ Jesus, will desire to keep his knowledge to himself; since rather he will feel himself, as he never did before, a debtor to all men, to make all partakers of the benefit. He will go to his brother man, like Andrew to Peter, and saying to him, 'We have found the Messias' (John i. 41), will seek to bring him to Jesus. If he hide the treasure, this hiding will be, not lest another should find, but lest he himself should lose it.[1] In the first moments that the truth is revealed to a soul, there may well be a tremulous fear lest the blessing found should, by some means or other, escape again. The anxiety that it may not do so, the jealous precautions for this end taken, would seem to be the truth signified by this re-concealment of the found treasure.

But having thus secured it for the moment, the finder,

[1] Maldonatus: 'Not lest another may find, but lest he himself may lose;' Jerome (*Comm. in Matt.* in loc.): 'Not that he does this out of jealousy, but that, with the fear of a man who keeps and is unwilling to lose, he hides away in his heart the treasure which he preferred to all his former riches.' H. de Sto. Victore differently (*De Arcâ Mor.* iii. 6): 'That man publishes abroad the treasures he has found, who bears the gift of wisdom he has received as a matter of boasting. But he hides away the treasure, who, when he has received the gift of Wisdom, seeks to make his boast therefrom not publicly in the eyes of men, but inwardly in the sight of God.'

'*and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.*' The joy is expressly mentioned here, being that in the strength whereof the finder of the spiritual treasure is enabled to part with everything besides.[1] No compulsion, no command is necessary; '*for joy thereof*' or '*in his joy*,' both being possible renderings, he cannot do otherwise; all other things have now no glory, 'by reason of the glory which excelleth.' Augustine excellently illustrates from his own experience this part of the parable. Describing the crisis of his own conversion, and how easy he found it, through this joy, to give up all which he had long dreaded to be obliged to renounce, which had so long held him fast bound in the chains of evil custom; and which if he renounced, it had seemed to him as though life itself would not be worth living, he exclaims: 'How sweet did it at once become to me, to want the sweetnesses of those toys! and what I feared to be parted from was now a joy to part with. For Thou didst cast them forth from me, Thou true and highest sweetness. Thou castedst them forth, and in their stead enteredst in Thyself, sweeter than all pleasure.'[2] The parting with those sinful delights which had hitherto held him bound, was, in Augustine's case, the selling of all that he had, that he might buy the field. Compare Phil. iii. 4–11, where St. Paul declares how he too sold all that he had, renounced his trust in his own righteousness, in his spiritual and fleshly privileges, that he might 'win Christ, and be found in Him.' In each of these illustrious instances, the man parted with the dearest thing that he possessed, so to make the treasure his own: though, in each case, the thing parted with how different! So, too, whenever any man renounces what is closest to him, rather than that that should hinder his embracing and making

[1] Bengel: 'Spiritual joy, which is an incentive to the denial of the world.'

[2] *Confess.* ix. 1: 'How delightful did it suddenly become to me to lack all frivolous delights, and these which I had feared to lose it was now a joy to forego. For Thou didst cast them from me, Who art the true and highest delight, Thou didst cast them from me and didst enter in their place, Who art sweeter than every pleasure.'

his own all the blessings of Christ,—when the lover of money renounces his covetousness,—and the indolent man, his ease, and the lover of pleasure, his pleasure,—and the wise man, his confidence in the wisdom of this world, then each is selling what he has, that he may buy the field which contains the treasure. Yet this selling of all is no arbitrary condition, imposed from without, but rather a delightful constraint, acknowledged within: even as a man would willingly fling down pebbles and mosses with which he had been filling his hands, if pearls and precious stones were offered him in their stead;[1] or as the dead leaves of themselves fall off from the tree, when propelled by the new buds and blossoms which are forcing their way from behind.

A difficulty has been sometimes found in the circumstance of the finder of the treasure purchasing the field, at the same time withholding, as plainly he does, from the owner the knowledge of a fact which enhanced its value so much; and which had the other known, either he would not have parted with it at all, or only at a much higher price. They argue that it is against the decorum of the divine teaching and of the Divine Teacher, that an action, morally questionable at least, if not absolutely unrighteous, should be used even for the outward setting forth of a spiritual action which is commended as worthy of imitation; that there is a certain approbation of the action conveyed even in the use of it for such ends; in fact, they find the same difficulty here as in the parables of the Unjust Steward and the Unjust Judge. Olshausen, so far from evading the difficulty, or seeking to rescue the present parable from lying under the same difficulty

[1] Augustine: 'Behold thou askest of the Lord, and sayest, Lord, give unto me. What shall He give unto thee, Who seeth thy hands filled with other matters? Behold the Lord would give to thee of his own, and seeth not where He may put it?' And again (*in* 1 *Ep. Joh. Tract.* 4): 'Thou must be filled with good, pour away therefore the bad. Bethink thee that God would fill thee with honey. If thou art filled with vinegar, where wilt thou find place for the honey? The vessel which contained the vinegar must be emptied. It must be cleansed, though it be with toil and rubbing, that so it may be made fit for use.'

as undoubtedly cleaves to one of those, himself urges the likeness which exists between the two, and affirms that, in both, *prudence* (klugheit) in respect of divine things is commended; so that they are parables of the same class, and in this aspect, at least, containing the same moral. But to the objection urged above it seems enough to reply, that not every part of his conduct who found the treasure is proposed for imitation,[1] but only his earnestness in securing the treasure found, his fixed purpose to make it at all costs and all hazards his own, and (which, I suppose, is Olshausen's meaning) his prudence, without any affirmation that the actual manner wherein that prudence showed itself was praiseworthy or not.[2]

[1] Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* lvii. 6): 'A similitude is not drawn by the Scriptures at all points; the thing itself is praised, but only in those points whence the similitude is drawn.' In books of casuistry, where they treat of the question, how far and where a finder has a right to appropriate things found, this parable is frequently adduced, as by Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* ii. qu. 69, art. 5): 'Concerning things found we must draw a distinction. For there are some things which were never among any man's possessions, such as the stones and gems which are found on the seashore. Things like these are granted to the holder, and the same is the case with treasures hidden from ancient times beneath the earth, of which there is no possessor surviving: except indeed that according to the civil laws the finder is bound to give a moiety to the lord of the field, if he find it in the field of another. Wherefore in the parable (*Matt.* xiii.) it is said of the finder of the treasure that he buys the field, with the intent to secure the right of possessing the whole of the treasure.'

[2] Calderon has founded several of his *Autos* on parables of our Lord; thus *El Tesoro Escondido* (*Autos*, Madrid, 1759, vol. iii. p. 372), as its name sufficiently indicates, on this; *La Viña del Señor* (vol. iii. p. 162) on that of the Wicked Husbandmen; *La Semilla y la Zizaña* (vol. v. p. 316) on those of the Sower and the Tares combined; *A tu próximo como á ti* (vol. iv. p. 324) on the Good Samaritan. Any one of these, were there room for it, would be well worthy of analysis, both for its own sake, and as showing the capabilities of highest poetical treatment which, in a great poet's hands, the parables possess; the latent and as yet unfolded germs of beauty and grandeur which they contain.'

PARABLE VI.

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

MATTHEW xiii. 45, 46.

ALMOST all which it would have needed to say upon this parable, had it stood alone, has been anticipated in the sister parable, which has just gone before. The relations in which the two stand to one another have been already noticed.[1] We

[1] Keim (*Jesu von Nazara*, vol. ii. p. 451) has brought out these relations excellently well: 'With deliberate purpose Christ has here distinguished a twofold analogy, that of the Finders and that of the Seekers. For most men come to the Kingdom of Heaven as to a lucky find, and it is veritably hidden in the world as the treasure is in the field. This kingdom of the Messiah, which is in the mind, sounds no alarm, nor does it study effect, since it is no kingdom of ostentation nor of prodigies, but of the Word. Rather it presents itself to man without any effort on his part, and comes to him as a surprise, and he takes what, so soon as he has eyes to see, shines before him as precious metal. But there are also some who, like merchants at markets, have sought for a costly, pure, and brilliant jewel of pearls. These are they who hunger and thirst after the Kingdom of God, after righteousness; who, like the prophets and judges of the Old Testament, are unsatisfied with any jewel to be found in the world's market; who search yearningly amid mental and spiritual possessions for a consolation and support for their souls, and for the cleansing of their consciences. Henceforward there is one and the same way for finders, and for the seekers, who now at last are finders, to whose eyes the pearl of great price has been revealed. Upon both comes the presentiment of the endless value of the treasure which lies before their eyes. The finder hides again the hidden treasure which he has come upon unawares in his digging. He cannot lightly abandon it for some one else to carry off while he leaves it exposed; and he cannot take it away until he has won a right to it. The seeker can no longer hasten to seek any other or any more pearls: he can only hasten to fetch the

have not here, as there, merely a *finder*, but also a *seeker*, of true wisdom—'*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man,*[1] *seeking goodly pearls.*' To find them has been the object of his labours: 'the search is therefore determinate, discriminative, unremitting.' He has set this purpose distinctly before him, and to it is bending all his energies; as one assured that man was not made in vain, that there must be a centre of peace for him, a good which will satisfy all the cravings of his soul, and who is determined not to rest till he has found that good. As yet he may not know that it is but *one*, for at the outset he is seeking *many* goodly pearls; but perhaps imagines that it is to be made up and combined from many quarters: but this also will be revealed to him in due time.[2]

It makes much for the beauty of the parable, and the fitness of the image used to set forth the surpassing value of the kingdom of God, that we keep in mind the esteem in which pearls were held in antiquity,[3] sums almost incredible

purchase-money for the merchant in whose strong hands the pearl is lying. Thus both are hastening—the one to the merchant with the pearl; the other to the lord of the field to purchase the field which contains the treasure; and both find no sum too high, but throw into this all their fortunes. So also the title to the Kingdom of Heaven and to its fellowship will only be won with the abandonment of all things with the spiritual renunciation of everything earthly, house and home, father and mother, even one's own person, in order to win the favour of the Lord of the Kingdom.'

[1] The pearl-merchant was termed *margaritarius*, a name sometimes also given to the diver.

[2] Augustine (*Serm. de Disc. Christ.* vol. vi. p. 583, Bened. ed.) assumes the *oneness* of that which here is found as furnishing another point of contrast, besides those already detailed, between this parable and the last. There the kingdom of heaven is presented as manifold, even as a treasure would contain precious things of various kinds laid up in it; here it is presented in its unity—as much as to say, This which is so multifold, is also single and at heart but one.

[3] Pliny: 'Pearls hold the chief and highest place of all precious things:' and the word which was rendered (Prov. iii. 15; viii. 11; xx. 15; xxxi. 10; Job xxviii. 18) by earlier translators of Scripture most commonly as 'rubies' (פְּנִינִים) is generally believed now to signify pearls (Gr. *πίννα*).

having been given for single pearls, when perfect of their kind. There were many defects which materially diminished their value, as for instance, if they had a yellow or dusky tinge, or were not absolutely round or smooth. The skill and wariness which the pearl-merchant therefore needed, if he would not have a meaner thing imposed on him in place of the best, will not be without its answer in the spiritual world.[1] There are many pearls of an inferior quality,[2] but this merchant is seeking '*goodly*' pearls; as he whom the merchant represents, has set before himself, not low and poor, but noble and worthy, aims; and this even in times anterior to that in which he finds the pearl of price. He is not one living for sensual objects. He has not made pleasure, or gain, or the high places of the world, the end and scope of his toils. But he has been, it may be, a philanthropist, a seeker of wisdom, a worshipper of the beautiful in nature or in art; one who has hoped to find his soul's satisfaction in some one of these things. '*Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.*' This '*pearl of great price*,' what is it? Many answers have been given, which yet, diverging as they may seem from one another, grow all out of one and the same root; all ultimately resolve themselves into one.[3] Whether we say the pearl is the kingdom of God within a man,—or the knowledge of Christ,[4]—or Christ

[1] Augustine (*Serm.* xxxvii. 3): 'Learn to value jewels aright, ye merchants of the kingdom of heaven.'

[2] Origen (*Comm. in Matt.* in loc.) has much curious learning about pearls; and details the theory of their formation current in antiquity. The fish conceived the pearl from the dew of heaven, and according to the quality of the dew, it was pure and round, or cloudy and deformed with specks (see Pliny, *H. N.* ix. 35; Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiii. 6. 85). The state of the atmosphere at the time of conception, and the hour of the day, had great influence on their size and colour. Thus Isidore of Seville: 'White pearls are better than those which have a tinge of yellow: for the former are white, either by reason of their freshness, or as the product of the morning dew: the latter are made dusky either by age or the evening air.' Cf. Greswell, *Expos. of the Parables*, vol. ii. pp. 220–222; and Bochart, *Hierozoicon*, pars ii. 5, 5–8.

[3] See Suicer, *Thes.* s. v. μαργαρίτης.

[4] H. de Sto. Victore (*Annott. in Matt.*): 'The good pearls are the

Himself,[1]—we do but in different ways express one and the same thing.

The merchant, having found this pearl which so transcended all other, '*went and sold all that he had, and bought it.*'[2] What this selling implies, has been already seen;[3] and to understand what the buying means, and what it does not mean, we may compare Isai. lv. 1; Matt. xxv. 9, 10; Rev. iii. 18; and Prov. xxiii. 23; 'Buy the truth, and sell it not;' obtain the truth at any price, and let no price tempt you to part with it. Chrysostom calls our attention here to the *one* pearl which the merchant finds, and the *many* which he had been seeking.[4] The same contrast is marked elsewhere; Martha is troubled about *many* things; Mary has found that but *one* thing is needful (Luke x. 41, 42). There is but one such pearl (though every seeker may obtain that one), since the truth is one, even as God is one; and the truth possessed restores that unity to the heart of man, which

law and the prophets; the one of great price is the knowledge of the Saviour.' Origen has these instructive references, Matt. xvii. 5-8; 2 Cor. iii. 10. Schoettgen observes (*Hor. Heb.* vol. i. p. 132): 'Beautiful and noteworthy doctrines and lessons were called by the Jews pearls.' Von Bohlen (*Das Alt. Ind.* vol. ii. p. 122) derives margarita from a Sanscrit word, manaârîtâ, signifying The pure. Another name it bore signified The beloved.

[1] Theophylact says, that it was at a moment when it lightened that the conception of the pearl from the heavenly dew took place; which explains an otherwise obscure passage in Clement of Alexandria (Potter's ed. p. 1014): 'This Pearl is the most pellucid and pure Jesus, whom the Virgin conceived from the divine lightning.' Augustine, too (*Quæst. ex Matt.* qu. 13), likens Christ to the pearl, though he does not bring out this point of comparison: 'For the Word of the Lord is lucid with the lustre of truth, and solid with the firmness of eternity, and self-similar at all points with the beauty of divinity, whereby, penetrating the shell of the flesh, we must recognise God. Bochart (*Hierozoicon*, pars ii. 5, 8, in fine) has a graceful bringing out of the points of likeness between the kingdom of God and a pearl.

[2] Prudentius (*Psychom.* 872–874) has a fine allusion.

[3] Vitringa tells here the story of Galeazzo Carracioli as an illustration of what this selling of all before now has meant for one who, having found the pearl of price, has resolved at all costs to make it his own.

[4] 'For truth is one and not manifold.'

sin had destroyed. The heart which had been as a mirror shattered into a thousand fragments, and every fragment reflecting some different object, is now reunited again, and the whole with more or less clearness reflects, as it was at the first intended to do, the one image of God. It is God alone in whom any intelligent creature can find its centre and true repose: only when man has found *Him*, does the great *Eureka* burst forth from his lips; in Augustine's beautiful and often quoted words, 'Lord, Thou hast made us *for* Thee, and our heart is restless until it resteth *in* Thee.'[1]

Before leaving this parable, it may be worth while to mention an interpretation which strangely reverses the whole matter. According to this, the merchant seeking goodly pearls is Christ Himself. The Church of the elect is the pearl of price: which that He might purchase and make his own, He parted with all that He had, emptying Himself of his divine glory, and taking the form of a servant.[2] Or yet more ingeniously, the pearl, as in the common explanation, is the kingdom of heaven; but Christ the merchant, who to secure that kingdom to us and make it ours, though He was so rich, gladly made Himself poor, buying that pearl and that treasure,—not indeed for Himself, but for us.[3]

[1] 'Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is not at peace until it rests in Thee.'

[2] Salmeron (*Serm. in Par. Evang.* p. 66) applies the same to the parable preceding: 'The man who found the treasure, that is, the precious Church of the elect, is Christ, Who spent all his goods for the sake of winning so great a treasure of the holy.' Compare the *Brief Exposition of Matth.* xiii. by J. N. Darby, pp. 30, 31.

[3] So Drexelius (Opp. vol. i. p. 209): 'Who is a truer merchant than Christ the Lord, Who gave for that precious merchandize the infinite price of his blood? He truly went and sold all things, and laid down his reputation, his blood, his life, that for us he might purchase heaven.' Compare the *Theol. Stud. und Krit.* 1846, pp. 939 946.

PARABLE VII.

THE DRAW-NET.

MATTHEW xiii. 47–50.

THIS parable might at first sight seem merely to say over again what the Tares had said already. Maldonatus, ascribing absolute identity of purpose to the two, conceives the parables of this chapter not to be set down in the order wherein the Lord spoke them, but this to have immediately followed upon that. Here, however, he is clearly mistaken; there is this fundamental difference between them, that the central truth of that is the *present* intermixture, of this, the *future* separation, of the good and the bad; of that, that men are not to effect the separation; of this, that the separation will one day, by God, be effected. The order in which we have the parables is that in which they were spoken; that other relating to the progressive development, this to the final consummation, of the Church. Olshausen draws a further distinction between the two; in that, the kingdom of God is represented rather in its idea, coextensive, as it shall ultimately be, with the whole world; in this, in its present imperfect form, as a less contained in a greater, though tending to spread over and embrace that greater; the Church gathering in its members from the world, as the net its fish from the sea.

With all this, the parables resemble one another so nearly, that much which has been already said, in considering the other, will apply to this. The same use has been made of both; there is the same continual appeal to both in the

Donatist controversy; both convey the same lesson, namely that He who founded a Church upon earth did not contemplate that Church as a communion free from all intermixture of evil; but that as there was a Ham in the ark, and a Judas among the twelve, so there should be a Babylon even within the bosom of the spiritual Israel; Esau should contend with Jacob even in the Church's womb,[1] till, like another Rebekah, she should often be compelled to exclaim, 'Why am I thus?' (Gen. xxv. 22). They convey, too, the same further lesson, that all this will in nowise justify self-willed departure from the fellowship of the Church, an impatient leaping over, or breaking through, the nets, as here it has often been called. The separation of a more unerring hand than man's is patiently to be waited for, which shall not fail to arrive when the mystery of the present dispensation has been accomplished.[2]

[1] See Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps.* cxxvi. 3.

[2] The following extracts will show the uses to which the parable was turned. Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* lxiv. 6): 'And as we are now prisoners in the sea in the nets of faith, let us rejoice that we swim there still within the nets, because still this sea rages with storms, but the nets which have captured us shall be brought to shore. Meanwhile, my brethren, let us lead good lives within the nets, and not break the nets and seek our way out. For many have broken the nets and have made schisms, and have sought their way out. And whereas they said that they could not endure the wickedness of the fish captured within the nets, it was they themselves who were wicked, rather than those whom they declared they could not endure.' The curious ballad verses, in a sort of Saturnian metre, and written, as Augustine tells us, to bring the subject within the comprehension of the most unlearned, begin with a reference to this parable:

> Abundantia peccatorum solet fratres conturbare;
> Propter hoc Dominus noster voluit nos præmonere,
> Comparans regnum cælorum reticulo misso in mare,
> Congregante multos pisces, omne genus hinc et inde,
> Quos cum traxissent ad litus, tunc cœperunt separare,
> Bonos in vasa miserunt, reliquos malos in mare.
> Quisquis recolit Evangelium, recognoscat cum timore:
> Videt reticulum Ecclesiam, videt hoc seculum mare,
> Genus autem mixtum pisces justus est cum peccatore:
> Seculi finis est litus, tunc est tempus separare:

This parable, the last in this grand series, commences thus: '*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind.*' If we ask to what manner of net the kingdom of heaven is likened here, the heading of the chapter in our Bibles calls it a '*draw-net*,' and the word of the original leaves no doubt upon the subject. The sagene, seine, or sean,[1] for the word

> Quando retia ruperunt, multum dilexerunt mare.
> Vasa sunt sedes sanctorum, quo non possunt pervenire.
>
> 'The multitude of sinners oft the brethren doth dismay,
> Therefore to preadmonish us, Our Master took this way:
> Likening the heavenly kingdom to a net cast in the deep,
> Which in its folds full many a fish of every kind doth sweep.
> And these men straight begin to sort, when they are dragged to shore;
> The good they put in vessels, the bad cast back once more.
> Who calls to mind this Gospel, full of terrors let him be,
> Seeing the net stands for the Church, and for the world the sea.
> Mixed is the shoal of fishes, just and unjust side by side,
> The shore's the end of the world, and the time comes to divide.
> But they who break the nets, of the sea are they full fain:
> 'Tis the vessels are the seats of saints, which these shall ne'er attain.'

One or two quotations from the minutes of the Conference at Carthage will show how the Donatists sought to evade the force of the arguments drawn from this parable. They did not deny that, since bad and good were in this net, it must follow that sinners are mixed with righteous in the Church upon earth; and that Christ contemplated such a mixture: only they affirmed (*Coll. Carth.* d. 3), 'this was spoken of hidden offenders, since the contents of a net sunk in the sea is unknown to the fishers, that is, to the priests, until it be drawn forth to the shore to be cleared, and the fish are revealed as good or bad. So also the hidden sinners, who have a place in the Church and are unknown to the priests, when they are revealed in the divine judgment are separated, like the bad fish, from the fellowship of the saints.' They take refuge here in an accidental feature of the parable; and Augustine well rejoins, with allusion to Matt. iii. 12 (*Ad Don. post Coll.* 10): 'Is it also under water or under ground that the threshing-floor is threshed, or are we at least to say that the separation is made in the night-time and not in the light of day, or that the husbandman is blindfold at his work?'

[1] Σαγήνη (not from ἔσω ἄγειν, but from σάττω, σέσαγα, onero), = מִכְמֹרֶת, a *hauling* net; in Latin, tragum, tragula, verriculum; *vasta* sagena, as Manilius calls it; the German Schleppnetze. On the coast of Cornwall, where the 'sean' is well known, it is sometimes half a

has been naturalized in English, is a net of immense length, suffering nothing to escape from it. This its all-embracing nature is no accidental or unimportant feature, but makes the parable prophetic of the wide reach and effectual operation of the Gospel. The kingdom of heaven should henceforward be a net, not cast into a single stream as hitherto, but into the broad sea of the whole world, and gathering '*of every kind*,' out of every kindred and tongue and people and

mile long. Leaded below, that it may sweep the bottom of the sea, and supported with corks above, it is carried out so as to enclose a large space of sea; the ends are then brought together, and it, with all it contains, is drawn up upon the shore; thus Ovid, ducebam ducentia retia pisces. Cicero calls Verres, with a play upon his name, *everriculum* in provinciâ, in that he swept all before him; and in the Greek Fathers we have *θανάτου σαγήνη*, *κατακλυσμοῦ σαγήνη* (Suicer, *Thes.* s. v.): see Hab. i. 15–17, LXX, where the mighty reach of the Chaldean conquests is set forth under this image, and by this word. In this view of it, as an *ἀπέραντον δίκτυον Ἄτης*, how grand is Homer's comparison (*Od.* xxii. 384) of the slaughtered suitors; whom Ulysses saw,

> *ὥσ τ' ἰχθύας, οὕσ θ' ἁλιῆες*
> *κοίλον ἐς αἰγιαλὸν πολιῆς ἔκτοσθε θαλάσσης*
> *δικτύῳ ἐξέρυσαν πολυωπῷ. οἱ δέ τε πάντες,*
> *κύμαθ' ἁλὸς ποθέοντες, ἐπὶ ψαμά θοισι κέχυνται.*

'Like fishes that the fishermen have drawn forth in the meshes of the net into a hollow of the beach from out the grey sea, and all the fish, sore longing for the salt sea waves, are heaped upon the sand.'—*Butcher and Lang.* Herodotus (iii. 149; vi. 31) tells us how the Persians swept away the population from some of the Greek islands; a chain of men, holding hand in hand, and stretching across the entire island, advanced over its whole length, taking the entire population as in a draw-net; and to this process the technical word *σαγηνεύειν* was applied. In Bonwick's *Last of the Tasmanians* is a full account of a very singular attempt, about the year 1830, to compel, by a rough process of the same kind, the whole surviving black population of Van Diemen's Land into one corner of the island, and to bring them so within the power of the Government. It issued, as might have been expected in an attempt over so vast an extent of territory, in total failure, in the capture of a single black. Cf. Plato, *Menexenus*, 240, b, c; *Legg.* iii. 698; Plutarch, *De Sol. Anim.* 26; and generally on the *σαγήνη* the *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Antt.* s. v. Rete, p. 823; and on the difference between it and the *ἀμφίβλησ τρον* or circular casting-net (Matt. iv. 18) my *Synonyms of the N. T.* § 64.

nation; or, as some understand it, men good and bad; that as the servants, in another parable, 'gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good' (Matt. xxii. 10); so here they collect of all kinds within the folds of their net; men of every diversity of moral character having the Gospel preached to them, and finding themselves within the confines of the visible Church.[1]

But as all use not aright the advantages which fellowship with Christ in his Church affords, an ultimate separation is necessary. Our Lord proceeds to describe it—'*Which, when it was full, they drew to shore,*[2] *and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.*' Whether these '*bad*'[3] are dead putrid fish, such as a net will sometimes

[1] Beza, indeed, translates ἐκ παντός γένους, ex omni *rerum* genere, as mud, shells, sea-weed, and whatever else of worthless would be swept into a net; these being the σαπρά, which in the next verse are '*cast away*;' and so in the Geneva Version, 'of all kinds *of things*.' But the whole drift of the parable makes it certain that the net is here regarded as a πάναγρον, and that *fish* of all kinds (as the Vulgate, ex omni genere *piscium*), and not *things* of all kinds, are intended. H. de Sto. Victore (*Annott. in Matt.*): 'He makes assembly from all those who are divided from God by sins, whether smaller or greater, and are scattered by the multitude of their iniquities.'

[2] Claudian:

> Attonitos ad litora pisces
> Æquoreus populator agit, rarosque plagarum
> Contrahit anfractus, et hiantes colligit oras.
>
> 'The waster of the waters drags to shore
> The astonished fishes, and his net's loose folds
> Tightens, and draws its gaping edges close.'

[3] Σαπρά, scil. ἰχθύδια. Grotius: 'These are the trash and refuse of the fish, a kind which, as not worth keeping, we see thrown away by fishers' ('uneatable and worthless,' Lucian; 'worthless fishes,' Apuleius); and this despite of Vitringa's note (*Erklärung d. Parab.* p. 344) I must think the right interpretation. Dead fish in a net can only rarely occur; while of the fish which, for instance, Ovid enumerates in his fragment of the *Halieuticon*, how many, though perfectly fresh, would be flung aside as not edible, as worthless or noxious, the immunda chromis, merito vilissima salpa, Et nigrum niveo portans in corpore virus Loligo, durique sues; or again,—Et capitis duro nociturus scorpius ictu,—all which might well have been gathered in this σαγήνη. Moreover, with Jewish

include, or fish worthless and good for nothing, 'that which was sick and unwholesome at the season,' or such as from their kind, their smallness, or some other cause, are profitable for nothing, and therefore flung carelessly aside to rot upon the beach, or to become food for the birds of prey (Ezek. xxix. 4, 5; xxxii. 3, 4), has been often a question; and it is not easy, as it is not very important, to decide. The interpretation, which is not affected by a determination in one of these senses or in another, is obvious, '*So shall it be at the end of the world.*' When all nations have been gathered into the external fellowship of the Church, when the religion of Christ has become the religion of the world, then the severing of the precious from the vile, of the just from the unjust, shall begin. But who are they that shall effect it? to whom shall this awful task be confided? Here I must entirely dissent from those, Vitringa,[1] for example, and Olshausen, who urge that they who first carry out the net, and they who discriminate between its contents, being, in the parable, the same; therefore, since the former are evidently the Apostles and their successors, now become, according to the Lord's promise, 'fishers of men' (Matt. iv. 19; Luke v. 10; Ezek. xlvii. 10; Jer. xvi. 16);[2] the latter must be in like manner,

fishermen, this rejection of part of the contents would of necessity find place, not because some were dead, but because they were unclean; 'all that have not fins and scales shall be an abomination unto you' (Lev. xi. 9-12). These probably were the σαπρά. Fritzsche combines both meanings, for he explains it, 'useless and putrid.' Our Translation has not determined absolutely for one sense or the other (see Suicer, *Thes.* s. v.). But some words of Tristram (*Natural History of the Bible*, p. 290) seem decisive on the matter: 'As illustrating this expression, we may observe that the greater number of the species taken on the lake are rejected by the fishermen, and I have sat with them on the gunwale while they *went through their net*, and threw out into the sea those that were too small for the market, or were considered unclean.'

[1] *Erklär. d. Parab.* p. 351, seq.

[2] In that grand Orphic hymn attributed to Clement of Alexandria (p. 312, Potter's ed.), Christ Himself is addressed as the chief Fisher; and, as here, the world is the great sea of wickedness, out of which the saved, the holy fish, are drawn:

not the angelic ministers of God's judgments, but the same *messengers* of the Covenant, and as such, '*angels*' (ver. 49); to whom, being equipped with divine power, the task of judging and sundering should be committed. No doubt the Church, in her progressive development, is always thus judging and separating (1 Cor. v. 4, 5; 2 Thess. iii. 6; 2 John 10; Matt. xviii. 17; Jude 22, 23); putting away one and another from her communion, as they openly declare themselves unworthy of it. But she does not count that she has thus cleansed herself, or that a perfect cleansing can be effected by the exercise of any power which now she possesses. There must be a final judgment and sundering, not any more from within, but from without and from above; and of this decisive crisis we find everywhere else in Scripture the angels of heaven distinctly named as the instruments (Matt. xiii. 41; xxiv. 31; xxv. 31; Rev. xiv. 18, 19). It is contrary then to the analogy of faith so to interpret the words before us as to withdraw this office from them. It is indeed true that in that familiar occurrence of our workday world which supplies the groundwork of the parable, the same who carry out the net would also bring it to shore; as they too would inspect its contents, selecting the good, and casting the worthless away. But it is a pushing of this, which in fact is the weak side of the comparison, too far, to require that the same should hold good in the spiritual thing signified. In the nearly allied parable of the Tares, there was no improbability in supposing those who watched the growth of the crop to be different from those who should

> Ἁλιεῦ μερόπων τῶν σωζομένων,
> πελάγους κακίας ἰχθῦς ἁγνοὺς
> κύματος ἐχθροῦ
> γλυκερῇ ζωῇ δελεάζων.
>
> 'Fisher of mortal men,
> Those that the savèd are,
> Ever the holy fish
> From the wild ocean
> Of the world's sea of sin
> By thy sweet life Thou enticest away.

finally gather it in; and, accordingly, such a difference is marked: those are the 'servants,' these are the 'reapers;' just as in every other parable of judgment there is a marked distinction between the present ministers of the kingdom, and the future executors of doom; in the Marriage of the King's Son between the 'servants' and the 'attendants,' though our Translation has effaced it (Matt. xxii. 3, 13). In the Pounds there is the same distinction between the 'servants' and 'those that stand by' (Luke xix. 24). That the agents in the one work and in the other are not the same could not here be so easily marked; but is slightly, yet sufficiently, indicated in another way. The fishers are not once mentioned by name. The imperfection of the human illustration to set forth the divine truth is kept in good part out of sight, by the whole circumstance being told, as nearly as may be, impersonally. And when the Lord Himself interprets the parable, He passes over, without a word, the beginning; thus still further drawing attention away from a feature of it, upon which to dwell might have needlessly perplexed his hearers; and explains only the latter part, where the point and stress of it lay. Assuming, then, as we may and must, the angels of heaven to be here, as everywhere else, the takers and the leavers, we may recognize an emphasis in the '*coming forth*' attributed to them. Ever since the first constitution of the Church they have been hidden,—for ages withdrawn from men's sight. But then, at that grand epoch, the winding up of the present age, the commencement of another, they shall again '*come forth*' from before the throne and presence of God, and walk up and down among men, the visible ministers of his judgments.

The deliberate character of that judgment-act which they shall accomplish, the fact that it shall be no hasty operation confusedly huddled over, is intimated in the *sitting down* of the fishers for the sorting and separating of the good from the bad.[1] From some image like that which our parable

[1] Thus Bengel, who to this καθίσαντες appends, Studiose; cf. Luke xiv. 28, 31; xvi. 6. At the same time it completes the natural picture:

supplies, the 'taking' and 'leaving' of Matt. xxiv. 41, 42, must be derived. There too the *taking* is probably for blessedness, the selecting of the precious; the *leaving* for destruction, the rejecting of the vile. Some reverse the meaning, yet hardly with justice; for what is the '*left*' but the refused, and the *refused* but the *refuse*? We dare not lay any stress upon the order here, that the good are *first* '*gathered into vessels*,' even though it is also the order of Matt. xxv. 34, 41, seeing that it is exactly reversed in the cognate parable of the Tares, where with a certain emphasis it is said, 'Gather ye together *first* the tares' (ver. 30). Of these '*vessels*,' Christ gives no interpretation; nor indeed is any needed. They are the 'barn' of ver. 30; the 'many mansions' of John xiv. 2; the 'everlasting habitations' of Luke xvi. 9; the 'city which hath foundations' for which Abraham looked, of Heb. xi. 10, 12, 22;[1] the 'New Jerusalem which cometh down out of heaven' of Rev. iii. 12. This task accomplished, those who drew the net to shore '*cast the bad away*.'[2] These words hardly prepare us for the fearful meaning which in the interpretation they receive—'*and shall cast them*,' that is, the wicked, '*into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth*.' No wonder that Chrysostom should characterize this as 'a terrible parable;'[3] that Gregory the Great should style it one 'rather to be trembled at than expounded.'[4] But on this '*furnace of fire*' something has been said already (p. 104). Thus, and

in illo
Cespite *consedi*, dum lina madentia sicco,
Utque recenserem captivos ordine pisces. Ovid, *Metam.* ix. 30.

'There on the turf I took my seat, while I dry my dripping nets, and that I might duly tell over the captured fish.'

[1] Augustine (*Serm.* cccLxviii. 3): 'The vessels are the seats of the saints and the great places of retreat of the happy life.'

[2] Note the frequency of the term ἐκβάλλειν ἔξω, resting on the image of the Church as a holy enclosure, with its line of separation from the unholy κόσμος (= οἱ ἔξω, Mark iv. 11; Col. iv. 5) distinctly drawn; thus John vi. 37; xii. 31; xv. 9.

[3] Φοβερὰ παραβολή.

[4] *Hom.* 11 *in Evang.*: Timendum est potius quam exponendum.

thus only, God Himself taking in hand to cleanse his Church, shall that entire freedom from all evil which belongs to the idea of the Church be at length brought about (Rev. xxii. 15).

Comparing once more this parable with that of the Tares, we find that, notwithstanding seeming resemblances, the lessons which they teach are very different. The lesson of that it is needless to repeat; but of this it clearly is, that we be not content with conclusion within the Gospel-net, since 'they are not all Israel who are of Israel;' that in the 'great house' of the Church 'there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour;' that each of us should therefore seek to be 'a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use' (2 Tim. ii. 20, 21); since despite of all the confusions of the visible Church, 'the Lord knoweth them that are his,' and will one day bring these confusions to an end, separating the precious from the vile, the gold from the dross, the true kernel of humanity from the husk in which for a while it was enveloped.

I conclude with a few remarks on the relation of these parables to one another. The mystical number seven has tempted not a few interpreters to seek some hidden mystery here; and when the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer, and the names of the seven first deacons (Acts vi. 5), have been turned into prophecy of seven successive conditions of the Church, not to speak of the seven Apocalyptic Epistles (Rev. ii. iii.),[1] it was unlikely that this heptad of parables should escape being made prophetic of the same. They have, in fact, so often been dealt with as prophecy, that a late ingenious writer[2] needed not to apologize for an attempt in this kind, as though he were suggesting something altogether novel and unheard of before. 'It is,' he says, 'my persuasion that the parables in this chapter should not be considered

[1] See my *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 4th edit. p. 59.

[2] Alex. Knox, *Remains*, vol. i. p. 408.

disjointedly, but taken together as a connected series, indicating, progressively, the several stages of advancement through which the mystical kingdom of Christ, upon earth, was to proceed, from its commencement to its consummation. . . . It will be understood, then, that each parable has a period peculiarly its own, in which the state of things, so signified, predominates; but when another state of things commences, the former does not cease. It only becomes less prominent; operative as really as ever, but in a way subsidiary to that which now takes the lead. It will follow that each succeeding stage implies a virtual combination of all that has gone before, and of course the grand concluding scene will contain the sublimated spirit and extracted essence of the whole.' Bengel has anticipated all this.[1] He refers the first parable to the times of Christ and his immediate Apostles, when was the original sowing of the word of eternal life. The second, that of the Tares, belongs to the age immediately following, when watchfulness against false doctrine began to diminish, and heresies to creep in. The third, that of the Mustard-seed, to the time of Constantine, when the Church, instead of even seeming to need support, evidently gave it, and the great ones of the earth sought its shadow and protection. The fourth, that of the Leaven, sets forth the diffusion of true religion through the whole world. The fifth, of the Hid Treasure, refers to the more hidden state of the Church, signified in the Apocalypse (xii. 6) by the woman flying into the wilderness. The sixth, that of the Pearl, to the glorious time when the kingdom shall be dearer than all things else, Satan being bound. The seventh, of the Draw-

[1] 'Besides illustrating the normal and constant relations of the kingdom of heaven or the Church, these seven parables agree in having a further and most recondite import, which refers to the different periods and ages of the Church, so that one of them takes its beginning after another as a complement to it, and no one of them leaves off before the beginning of the next in order.' An essay by Reuss: *Meletema de Sensu Septem Parab. Matth. xiii. Prophetico*, Jenæ, 1734, is in the same line of interpretation. See too the *Collected Writings of the late Thomas Carlyle* (Advocate), 1878, pp. 361–402.

net, describes the ultimate confusion, separation, and judgment.

In rejecting this notion of an historico-prophetical character, as belonging to these parables, for which certainly there is no warrant whatever, we must not at the same time refuse to acknowledge that the mystical number seven has here, as almost everywhere else in Scripture, its purpose and meaning, that the parables possess a most significant unity of their own, being knit to one another by very real bonds, succeeding one another in a logical order, and together constituting a complete and harmonious whole. But it is the ideas and laws, not the actual facts, of the Church's history which they declare. Thus in the Sower are set forth the causes of the failures and success which the word of the Gospel meets, when it is preached in the world. In the Tares, the obstacles to the internal development of Christ's kingdom, even after a Church has been hedged in and fenced round from the world, are traced up to their true author, with a warning against methods in which men might be tempted to remove those obstacles. The Mustard-seed and the Leaven announce, the first, the outward, and the second, the inward, might of that kingdom; and therefore implicitly prophesy of its development in spite of all these obstacles, and its triumph over them. As these two are objective and general, so the two which follow, the Hid Treasure and the Pearl, are subjective and individual; declaring the relation of the kingdom to every man, its supreme worth, and how those who have discovered that worth will be willing to renounce all things to make this their own. They have besides mutual relations already touched on; and in the same way as the Mustard-seed and the Leaven complete one another. Finally this of the Draw-net declares how that entire separation from evil, which it is right to long for, but wrong by self-willed efforts prematurely to anticipate, shall in God's own time come to pass; looking forward to which, each should give diligence so to use the privileges and means of grace which the communion of the Church affords him,

that he may be among the 'taken' and not the 'left,' when the great 'Fisher of men' shall separate for ever between the precious and the vile.[1]

[1] Marchius, who (*Syll. Diss. Exerc.* 4) sets himself against the caprice of the historico-prophetic exposition, recognizes them as in this sense prophetic: 'The Church was destined to be planted by means of the preaching of the Gospel, a preaching which, nevertheless, among many was to prove useless. By the cunning malice of Satan many were to be associated with the Church who did not really belong to it, and hence must one day be separated from it. From small beginnings the Church was to rise to the highest greatness; from this it was to advance to embrace all the elect; enclosed in its bosom it was to hold the true and highest good, for the sake of which it was rightly to be sought before all else. And this highest good, as it outshone all other excellent things, so also was to be sought by the elect with the loss of all besides. Furthermore, this good was not by any means to be shared by all who might have been drawn into external communion with the Church, but yet were destined to be cast from it into perdition. In this manner these parables are easily linked together in respect to their principal aim.'

PARABLE VIII.

THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT.

MATTHEW xviii. 21–35.

A QUESTION of Peter's gives occasion to this parable, that question growing out of some words of Christ, in which He had declared to the members of his future kingdom how they should bear themselves towards an offending brother. Peter would willingly know more on this matter, and brings to the Lord his question: '*Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?*' Chrysostom observes that Peter, thus instancing seven as the number of times of forgiveness, accounted probably that his charity was taking a large stretch, these seven being four times oftener than the Jewish masters enjoined; grounding as they did the duty of forgiving three times and not more, upon Amos i. 3; ii. 6; and on Job xxxiii. 29, 30.[1] He extended their three to seven, no doubt, out of a just sense that the spirit of the new law of love which Christ has brought into the world,—a law larger, freer, more long-suffering than the old,—demanded this.[2] There was then in Peter's mind a

[1] Lightfoot, *Hor. Heb.* in loc.

[2] While this is true, there were yet deeper motives for his naming seven times. It is the number in the divine law with which the idea of remission (ἄφεσις) is ever linked. The seven times seventh year was the year of jubilee (ἔτος τῆς ἀφέσεως), Lev. xxv. 28; cf. iv. 6, 17; xvi. 14, 15. It is true that it is the number of punishment, or retribution for evil, also (Gen. iv. 15; Lev. xxvi. 18, 21, 24, 28; Deut. xxviii. 25; Ps. lxxix. 12; Prov. vi. 31; Dan. iv. 16; Rev. xv. 1); yet this only confirms what has been said; since there lies ever in punishment the idea of restoration of

consciousness of this new law of love; an obscure one, it is true; else he would not have deemed it possible that love could ever be overcome by hate, good by evil. But there was, at the same time, a fundamental error in the question itself; for in proposing a limit beyond which forgiveness should not extend, it was evidently assumed, that a man in forgiving, gave up a right which he might, under certain circumstances, exercise. In this parable the Lord will make clear that when God calls on a member of his kingdom to forgive, He does not call on him to renounce a right, but that he has now no right to exercise in the matter; for having himself sought and accepted forgiveness, he has implicitly pledged himself to show it; and it is difficult to imagine how any amount of didactic instruction could have brought home this truth with at all the force and conviction of the parable which follows.

'*Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.*[1] *Therefore*,'—to the end that Peter may understand the larger demands made on him by the new law of love—'*is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.*' This is the first of the parables in which God

disturbed relations, and so of forgiveness (Ezek. xvi. 42); punishment being as the storm which violently restores the disturbed equilibrium of the moral atmosphere. Gregory of Nyssa well (*Opp.* vol. i. p. 159): 'Peter observed, for it is an ancient rule of tradition, that the number seven is significant of a remission of sins, a perfect rest, whereof the sabbath, the seventh day from the beginning, is the symbol.'

[1] Our Lord's '*seventy times seven*' of forgiveness makes a wonderful contrast, which has not escaped the notice of St. Jerome (vol. ii. p. 565, edit. Bened.), to Lamech, the antediluvian Antichrist's, seventy and seven-fold of revenge (Gen. iv. 24).—Ἑβδομηκοντάκις ἑπτά is not, as Origen and some others understand it, $70 + 7 = 77$; for that would be rather ἑβδομήκοντα ἑπτάκις, but $70 \times 7 = 490$. In the famous letter of Innocent III. to the Patriarch of Constantinople, setting forth the paramount claims of the Roman See, the argument to be derived from this parable, and especially from these words, is not omitted: 'Thus the number seven multiplied with itself in this place, signifies the sum total of sins of the sum total of sinners, for only Peter can loose not merely all offences, but the offences of all.'

appears as King. We are the servants with whom He takes account. This account, as is plain, is not the *final* reckoning, not therefore identical with the reckoning of Matt. xxv. 19; 2 Cor. v. 10; Rev. xx. 11, 12; but rather such as that of Luke xvi. 2. To this He brings us by the preaching of the law,—by the setting of our sins before our face,—by awakening and alarming our conscience that was asleep before,—by bringing us into adversities (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11–13),—by casting us into sore sicknesses[1] (Job xxxiii. 19 30), into perils of death; so that there is not a step between us and it (2 Kin. xx. 4); He takes account with us, when He makes us feel that we could not answer Him one thing in a thousand, that our trespasses are more than the hairs of our heads; when by one means or another He brings our careless carnal security to an end (Ps. l. 21; Acts xvi. 30). Thus David was summoned before God by the word of Nathan the prophet (2 Sam. xii.); thus the Ninevites by the preaching of Jonah (Jon. iii. 4); thus the Jews by John the Baptist (Luke iii. 3–14).

'*And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.*' The sum is great, whatever talents we assume; if Hebrew talents, it will be enormous indeed;[2] yet thus only the fitter to express the immensity of every man's transgression in thought, word, and deed, against God. Over against the Ten Commandments which he should have kept, are the ten thousand talents,—for the number is not accidental,—setting forth the

[1] Anselm (*Hom.* 5): 'God begins to reckon when by the troubles of infirmity He brings men to their bed and to death.'

[2] How vast a sum it was, we can most vividly realize to ourselves by comparing it with other sums mentioned in Scripture. In the construction of the tabernacle twenty-nine talents of gold were used (Exod. xxxviii. 24); David prepared for the temple three thousand talents of gold, and the princes five thousand (1 Chron. xxix. 4–7); the queen of Sheba presented to Solomon one hundred and twenty talents (1 King x. 10); the king of Assyria laid upon Hezekiah thirty talents of gold (2 Kin. xviii. 14); and in the extreme impoverishment to which the land was brought at the last, one talent of gold was laid upon it, after the death of Josiah, by the king of Egypt (2 Chron. xxxvi. 3).

debts (see Matt. vi. 12) which he has incurred. So far as the letter of the parable reaches, we may account for the vastness of the debt by supposing the defaulter to have been one of the chief officers of the king, a farmer or administrator of the royal revenues.[1] Or, seeing that in the despotisms of the East, where a nobility does not exist, and all, from the highest to the lowest, stand in an absolutely servile relation to the monarch, this name of '*servant*'[2] need not hinder us from regarding him as one, to whom some chief post of trust and honour in the kingdom had been committed,—a satrap who should have remitted the revenues of his province to the royal treasury.[3] The king had not far to go, he had only '*begun to reckon*,' when he lighted on this defaulter; perhaps the first whose accounts were examined; there may have been others with yet larger debts behind. This one '*was brought unto him*,' for he never would have come of

[1] In the Jewish parable (Schoettgen, *Hor. Heb.* vol. i. p. 155), bearing some resemblance to this, the sins of men being there represented as an enormous debt, which it is impossible to pay,—it is the tribute due from an entire city which is owing, and which, at the prayer of the inhabitants, the king remits.

[2] Euripides (*Hel.* 276): Τὰ βαρβάρων γὰρ δοῦλα πάντα πλὴν ἑνός. 'Among barbarians all are slaves save one.'

[3] Harpalus, satrap of Babylonia and Syria, besides the enormous sums which he had squandered, carried off with him five thousand talents when he fled to Athens from the wrath of Alexander (Grote, *Hist. of Greece*, vol. viii. p. 496). It was with exactly ten thousand talents that Darius sought to buy off Alexander, that he should not prosecute his conquests in Asia (Plutarch, *Reg. et Imp. Apoph.*); being the same sum with which Haman would have purchased of the Persian king permission to destroy all the Jews in the kingdom (Esth. iii. 9). The same was the fine imposed by the Romans on Antiochus the Great, after his defeat by them. When Alexander, at Susa, paid the debts of the whole Macedonian army, those were not brought up to more than twice this figure, though every motive was at work to enhance the amount (Droysen, *Gesch. Alexanders*, p. 500). Von Bohlen (*Das Alt. Ind.* vol. ii. p. 119) gives almost incredible notices of the quantities of gold in the ancient East.—The immensity of the sum may in part have moved Origen to his strange supposition, that it can only be the man of sin (2 Thess. ii.) that is here indicated, or stranger still, the Devil! Compare Thilo, *Cod. Apocryphus*, vol. i. p. 887, and Neander, *Kirch. Gesch.* vol. v. p. 1122.

himself; more probably would have made that '*ten thousand*' into twenty; for the secure sinner goes on, heaping up wrath against the day of wrath, writing himself an ever deeper debtor in the books of God.

'*But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.*' The sale of the debtor's wife and children rested upon the assumption that they were a part of his property. Such was the theory and practice of the Roman law. That it was allowed under the Mosaic law to sell an insolvent debtor, is implicitly stated, Lev. xxv. 39; and from ver. 41 we infer that his family came into bondage with him; no less is implied at Exod. xxii. 3; 2 Kin. iv. 1; Neh. v. 5; Isai. l. 1; lviii. 6; Jer. xxxiv. 8–11; Amos ii. 6; viii. 6. The later Jewish doctors disallowed this severity, except where a thief should be sold to make good the wrong which he had done; and in our Lord's time a custom so harsh had probably quite disappeared from among the Jews.[1] Certainly the imprisonment of a debtor, twice occurring in this parable (ver. 30, 34), formed no part of the Jewish law; and, where the creditor possessed the power of selling him into bondage, was wholly superfluous. '*The tormentors*' also (ver. 34) have a foreign appearance, and dispose us to look for the scene of the parable among the Oriental monarchies, and not in the Jewish commonwealth, where a more merciful legislation tempered the rights of the rich and the strong. For the spiritual significance, this of having nothing to pay expresses the utter bankruptcy of every child of Adam as he stands in the presence of a holy God, and is tried by the strictness of his holy law (Rom. iii. 23; Job xlii. 5, 6). The dreadful command that he shall be sold and all that he has (cf. Ps. xliv. 12), is the expression of God's right and power altogether to alienate from Himself, reject, and deliver over into bondage, all those who have thus come short of his glory (Ps. xliv. 12); that by a terrible but righteous sentence

[1] Michaëlis, *Mos. Recht*, vol. iii. pp. 58–60.

these, unless this sentence be reversed, shall be punished by everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power.

'*The servant therefore*,' hearing the dreadful doom pronounced against him, betakes himself to supplication, the only resource that is left him; he '*fell down, and worshipped him*.' The formal act of worship, or adoration, consisted in prostration on the ground, with the embracing and kissing of the feet and knees. Origen bids us here to note a nice observance of proprieties in the slighter details of the parable. This servant '*worshipped*' the king, for that honour was paid to royal personages; but we shall not find that the other servant '*worshipped*'—which, as between equals, would have been out of place,—he only '*besought*,' him. His '*Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all*,' is characteristic of the anguish of the moment, out of which he is ready to promise impossible things, even mountains of gold, if only he may be delivered from his present fear. When words corresponding to these find utterance from a sinner's lips in the first conviction of his sin, they testify that he has not yet attained to a full insight into his relations with God; but has still much to learn; and this chiefly, that no future obedience can make up for past disobedience; since that future obedience God claims for his own, and as nothing more than his due. It could not, therefore, even were there no fault or flaw in it, and there will be many, make compensation for the defects of the past; and in this '*I will pay thee all*,' we must detect the voice of self-righteousness, imagining that, if only time were allowed, it could make all past shortcomings good. This goes far to explain the later conduct of the suppliant here. It is clear that he whom this servant represents, had never come to a true recognition of the vastness of his debt. Little, in the subjective measure of his own estimate, has been forgiven him, and therefore he loves little, or not at all (Luke vii. 47). It is true that by his demeanour and his cry he did recognize his indebtedness, else would there have been no setting of

him free; and he *might* have gone on, and, had he only been true to his own mercies, he would have gone on, to an ever fuller recognition of the grace shown him: but as it was, in a little while he lost sight of it altogether, and showed too plainly that he had 'forgotten that he was purged from his old sins' (2 Pet. i. 9).

However, at the earnestness of his present prayer, '*the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.*'[1] The severity of God only endures till the sinner is brought to acknowledge his guilt; like Joseph's harshness with his brethren, it is love in disguise; and having done its work, having brought him to own that he is verily guilty, it reappears as grace again; that very reckoning, which at first threatened him with irremediable ruin, being, if he will use it aright, the largest mercy of all; bringing indeed his debt to a head, but only bringing it to this head, that it may be for ever abolished (Ps. ciii. 12; Jer. l. 20; Mic. vii. 19). That, however, must be first done. There can be no forgiving in the dark. God will forgive; but He will have the sinner to know what and how much he is forgiven; there must be first a 'Come now, and let us reason together,' before the scarlet can be made white as snow (Isai. i. 18). The sinner must know his sins for what they are, a mountain of transgression, before ever they can be cast into the deep sea of God's mercy. He must first have the sentence of death in himself, ere the words of life will have any abiding worth for him.

Such abiding worth they have not for the servant who, crying for mercy, has himself obtained it (Wisd. xii. 18, 19).

[1] Compare Chardin (*Voy. en Perse*, vol. v. p. 285): 'Disgrace in Persia is infallibly accompanied by the confiscation of property, and this loss is a great and terrible misfortune, for a man is stripped of all he possesses at a moment's notice and has nothing to call his own. His property, his slaves, and sometimes even his wife and children, are taken from him. Eventually his prospects brighten. The king makes known his pleasure concerning him. His family, some of his slaves and his furniture, are nearly always restored to him, and after a time he is often received back into favour at court, and once more takes office.'

'*The same servant went out*,' that is, from his master's presence, '*and found*,' on the instant, as it would seem, and while the memory of his lord's goodness should have been fresh upon him, '*one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence*.' May we press this '*went out*,' and say that we go out from the presence of our God, when we fail to keep an ever-lively sense of the greatness of our sin, and the greatness of his forgiveness? So more than one interpreter;[1] yet I cannot see more in this than what the outward conditions of the parable require. He is said to go out, because in the actual presence of his lord he could not have ventured on the outrage which follows. The term '*fellowservant*' here does not imply equality of rank between these two, or that they filled similar offices;[2] but only that they stood both in the relation of servants to a common lord. And this sum is so small, '*an hundred pence*,' as the other had been so large, '*ten thousand talents*,' to signify how little any man can offend against his brother, compared with that which every man has offended against God;[3] so that, in Chrysostom's words, these offences to those are as a drop of water to the boundless ocean.[4]

The whole demeanour of this unrelenting creditor toward *his* debtor is graphically described: '*He laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying*,[5] *Pay me that thou owest*.'

[1] Thus Theophylact: 'For no man that abideth in God is without compassion.'

[2] Such would have been *ὁμόδουλος*, this is *σύνδουλος*.

[3] The Hebrew talent = 300 shekels (Exod. xxxviii. 25, 26). Assuming this, the proportion of the two debts to one another would be as follows:

10,000 talents : 100 pence :: 1,250,000 : 1.

[4] Melanchthon: 'For this reason is the sum set down as so great, namely, that we may know that in the sight of God we have truly many and great sins. If thou wilt look into thy life thou wilt easily find many; for great is the carelessness of the flesh, great our negligence in prayer, great our distrust, and many our doubts of God. So also diverse lusts roam within us without limit.'

[5] Erasmus: '*Ἔπνιγεν*, he dragged him violently by the throat, is the phrase for one who forcibly drags another to prison or before a judge.' *Ἄγκειν* is the more classical word.

Some press the word in the original, and find therein an aggravation of this servant's cruelty, as though he was not even sure whether the debt were owing or not.[1] There is no warrant for this. That the debt was owing is plain; he found, we are told, '*one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence.*' Any different assumption would mar the proprieties of the story, would turn the edge of the parable, and we should have here a vulgar extortioner and wrong-doer. But such a one the law would have sufficiently condemned; there would have been no need to speak for this a parable of the kingdom of heaven. The lessons which it teaches are different; lessons which they need to learn who are not under the law, but under grace; and this chiefly—that it is not always *right*, but often the most opposite to right, to press our *rights*, that in the kingdom of grace the *summum jus* may be the *summa injuria*. This man would fain have been measured to by God in one measure, while he measured to his fellows in another. He would fain be forgiven, while yet he did not forgive. But this may not be. A man must make his choice. It is free to him to dwell in the kingdom of grace: but then, receiving grace, he must show grace; finding love, he must exercise love. If, on the contrary, he pushes his rights as far as they will go, if the law of severest justice is the law of his dealings with his fellow-men, he must look for the same as the law of God's dealings with him, and in the measure wherein he has meted, that it shall be measured to him again.

It was in vain that '*his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all;*' unconsciously using exactly the same words of entreaty which he, in the agony of his distress, had used, and, using, had found mercy. '*He would not; but*

[1] The εἴ τι ὀφείλεις, which reading, as the more difficult, is to be preferred to ὅ τι ὀφείλεις, and which is retained by Lachmann, does not imply any doubt as to whether the debt were really due or no: but the conditional form was originally, though of course not here, a courteous form of making a demand.

went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt;' dragging, as we may suppose, his debtor with him till he could consign him to the safe custody of the jailer; refusing, in Chrysostom's words, 'to recognize the port in which he had himself so lately escaped shipwreck;' and all unconscious that he was condemning himself, and revoking his own mercy. But such is man, so harsh and hard, when he walks otherwise than in a constant sense of forgiveness received from God. Ignorance or forgetfulness of his own guilt makes him harsh, unforgiving, and cruel to others; or at best, he is only hindered from being so by those weak defences of natural character which may at any moment break down. He who knows not his own guilt, is ever ready to exclaim, as David in the time of his worst sin, 'The man that hath done this thing shall surely die' (2 Sam. xii. 5); to be as extreme in judging others, as he is remiss and indulgent in judging himself; while, on the other hand, it is to them 'who are spiritual' that St. Paul commits the restoring of a brother 'overtaken in a fault' (Gal. vi. 1); and when he urges on Titus the duty of showing meekness unto all men, he finds the motive here—'for we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures' (Tit. iii. 3). It is just in man to be merciful (Matt. i. 19), to be *humane* is *human*. None but the altogether Righteous may press his utmost rights; whether He will do so or not is determined by altogether different considerations, but He has not that to hold his hand, which every *man* has, even the sense of his own proper guilt (John viii. 7–9).

'*So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.*' It is not in heaven only that indignation is felt when men thus measure to others in so different a measure from that which has been measured to them. There are on earth also those who have learned what is the meaning of the mercy which the sinner finds, and what the obligations which it imposes on him; and who mourn in their prayer when this is greatly forgotten by others round them. The

servants were '*sorry*;' their lord, as we read presently, was '*wroth*' (ver. 34); to them grief, to him anger, is ascribed. The distinction is not accidental, nor without its grounds. In man, the sense of his own guilt, the deep consciousness that whatever sin he sees come to ripeness in another, exists in its germ and seed in his own heart, with the knowledge that all flesh is one, and that the sin of one calls for humiliation from all, will rightly make sorrow the predominant feeling in his heart, when the spectacle of moral evil is brought before his eyes (Ps. cxix. 136, 158; Rom. ix. 2; 2 Pet. i. 7); but in God the pure hatred of sin,[1] which is, indeed, his love of holiness at its opposite pole, finds place. At the same time the sorrow which is here ascribed to the servants is not, as Bengel has well observed,[2] without its own admixture of indignation. As the servants of the king here, so the servants of a heavenly King complain to Him, mourn over all the oppressions that are wrought in their sight: the things which they cannot set right themselves, the wrongs which they are weak to redress, they can at least bring to Him; and they do not bring them in vain. '*Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant*'[3]—this, which he had not called him on account of his debt, he now calls him on account of his ingratitude and cruelty—'*I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant even as I had pity on thee?*'[4] The guilt which he is charged with is, not that, *needing mercy*, he refused to show it, but that, *having received mercy*, he remains unmerciful still (cf. 1 John iv. 11). A most important difference! They, therefore, who like him are hard-hearted and cruel, do not thereby bear witness that they have

[1] On the language of Scripture, attributing anger, repentance, jealousy to God, Augustine has good remarks (*Con. Adv. Leg. et Proph.* i. 20; and *Ad Simplic.* ii. qu. 2).

[2] 'Often the word λύπη (sorrow) denotes indignation as well.'

[3] Bengel: 'He had not been called so on account of his debt,'—a remark which Origen and Chrysostom had already made.

[4] See Chrysostom, *De Simult. Hom.* xx. 6, an admirable discourse.

received no mercy: on the contrary, the stress of their offence is, that having received an infinite mercy, they remain unmerciful yet. The objective fact, that Christ has put away the sin of the world, and that we have been baptized into the remission of sins, stands firm, whether we allow it to exercise a purifying, sanctifying, humanizing influence on our hearts or not. Our faith apprehends, indeed, the benefit, but has not created it, any more than our opening of our eyes upon the sun has first set the sun in the heavens.

'*And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him*'—according to that word, 'He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy' (Jam. ii. 13). The king had dealt with him before as a creditor with a debtor, but now as a judge with a criminal. '*The tormentors*' are those who, as the word implies, shall make the life of a prisoner bitter to him; wring out from him the confession of any concealed hoards which he may still possess; even as there are '*tormentors*' in that world of woe, whereof this prison is a figure—fellow-sinners and evil angels—instruments of the just yet terrible judgments of God.[1] But here it is strange that the king delivers the offender to prison and to punish-

[1] Grotius makes the βασανισταί (tormentors) merely = δεσμοφύλακες (jailers), and so Kuinoel, who observes that debtors are given to safe keeping, but not to tortures. This is not accurate. Thus in early times there were certain legal tortures, a chain weighing fifteen pounds, a pittance of food barely sufficient to sustain life (see Arnold, *Hist. of Rome*, vol. i. p. 136; Livy, ii. 23), which the Roman creditor might apply to the debtor for the bringing him to terms. In the East, too, where no depth of apparent poverty excludes the suspicion that there may be somewhere a hidden store, where too it is almost a point of honour not to pay but on hardest compulsion, the torture would be often used to wring something from the sufferings of the debtor himself, or from the compassion of his friends. In all these cases the jailer would be naturally the 'tormentor' as well (see 1 Kin. xxii. 27); so that '*tormentors*' may well stand in its proper sense. Cf. 4 Macc. vi. 11. Had this wicked servant merely been given into ward now, his punishment would have been lighter than it should have been, when his offence was not near so enormous as now it had become; for then he was to have been sold into slavery.

ment not for the evil which he had just wrought, but for that old debt which had seemed unconditionally remitted to him. When Hammond says, that the king 'revoked his *designed* mercy,' and would transfer this view of the transaction to the relation between God and sinners, this is one of those evasions of a difficulty by help of an ambiguous expression, or a word ingeniously thrust in, which are too frequent even in good interpreters of Scripture. It was not merely a *designed* mercy; the king had not merely *purposed* to forgive him, but, as is distinctly declared, '*forgave him the debt.*' It has been ingeniously suggested that the debt for which he is now cast into prison, is the debt of mercy and love, which, according to that pregnant word of St. Paul's, 'Owe no man anything, but to love one another,' he owed, but had so signally failed to pay. Few, however, would be satisfied with this. As little are the cases of Adonijah and Shimei (1 Kin. ii.) altogether in point. They, no doubt, on occasion of their later offences, were punished far more severely than they would have been, but for their former faults; yet for all this it is not the former offences which are revived that they may be punished, but the later offence which calls down its own punishment; not to say that parallels drawn from questionable acts of imperfect men, go but a little way in establishing the righteousness of God.

The question which seems involved in all this, Do sins, once forgiven, return on the sinner through his after offences? is one frequently and fully discussed by the Schoolmen;[1] and of course this parable occupies a prominent place in such discussions. But it may be worth considering, whether difficulties upon this point do not arise mainly from too dead

[1] By Pet. Lombard (*Sent.* iv. dist. 22); Aquinas (*Sum. Theol.* pars iii. qu. 88); and H. de Sto. Victore (*De Sacram.* ii. pars, 14, 9: Utrum peccata semel dimissa redeant). Cf. Augustine, *De Bapt. Con. Don.* i. 12. Cajetan, quoting Rom. xi. 29, 'the gifts of God are without repentance' (ἀμεταμέλητα), explains thus the recalling of the pardon which had once been granted: 'Debts once forgiven are again claimed, but not, as formerly, as debts, but as the subject-matter of ingratitude which they have now become,'—which is exactly the decision of Aquinas.

and formal a way of contemplating the forgiveness of sins; from our suffering the earthly circumstances of the remission of a debt to embarrass the heavenly truth, instead of regarding them as helps, but weak and often failing ones, for the setting forth of that truth. One cannot conceive of remission of sins apart from living communion with Christ; being baptized into Him, we are baptized into the forgiveness of sins; and the abiding in Christ and the forgiveness of sins go ever henceforward hand in hand, are inseparable one from the other. But if we cease to abide in Him, we then fall back into that state which is of itself a state of condemnation and death, and one on which the wrath of God is resting. If then, setting aside the contemplation of a man's sins as a formal debt, which must either be forgiven to him or not forgiven, we contemplate the life out of Christ as a state or condition of wrath, and the life in Christ as one of grace, the one a walking in darkness, and the other a walking in the light, we can better understand how a man's sins should return upon him; that is, he sinning anew falls back into the darkness out of which he had been delivered, and, no doubt, all that he has done of evil in former times adds to the thickness of that darkness, causes the wrath of God to abide more terribly on that state in which he now is, and therefore upon him (John v. 14). Nor may we leave out of sight that all forgiveness, short of that crowning and last act, which will find place on the day of judgment, and will be followed by a blessed impossibility of sinning any more, is conditional, in the very nature of things so conditional, that the condition must in every case be assumed, whether distinctly stated or not; that condition being that the forgiven man continue in faith and obedience, in that state of grace into which he has been brought; which he who by this unmerciful servant is figured to us here, had evidently failed to do. He that will partake of the final salvation must abide in Christ, else he will be 'cast forth as a branch and withered' (John xv. 6). This is the condition, not arbitrarily imposed from without, but belonging to the very essence of the salvation itself; just

as if one were drawn from the raging sea, and set upon the safe shore, the condition of his continued safety would be that he remained there, and did not again cast himself into the raging waters. In this point of view 1 John i. 7 will supply an interesting parallel: 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' He whom this servant represents does not abide in the light of love, but falls back into the old darkness; he has, therefore, no fellowship with his brother, and the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ ceases from him.

It is familiar to many that the theologians of Rome have drawn an argument for purgatory from the words, '*till he should pay all that was due*,' and no less from the parallel expression, Matt. v. 26; as though they marked a limit of time beyond which the punishment should not extend. But the phrase is proverbial, and all which it signifies is, that the offender shall now taste of the extreme rigour of the law; shall have justice without mercy; and always *paying*, shall yet never have *paid off*, his debt.[1] For since the sinner could never acquit the slightest portion of the debt in which he is indebted to God, the putting that as a condition of his liberation, which it is impossible could ever be fulfilled, may be the strongest possible way of expressing the everlasting duration of his punishment. When the Phocæans, abandoning their city, swore that they would not return till the mass of iron which they plunged into the sea rose once more to the surface, this was the most emphatic form they could devise of declaring that they would *never* return; such an emphatic declaration is the present.

The Lord concludes with a word of earnest warning: '*So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye*

[1] See Gerhard, *Loci Theoll.* loc. xxvii. 8. Chrysostom: 'That is to say perpetually, for he will never pay it off': and Augustine (*De Serm. Dom. in Mon.* i. 11): 'Until thou payest. . . . I must believe that He is alluding to the punishment which is called eternal.' So Remigius: 'He shall ever be paying, but never pay in full.'

from your hearts[1] *forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.*' '*So*'—with the same rigour; such treasures of wrath, as well as such treasures of grace, are with Him: He who could so greatly forgive, can also so greatly punish. '*My heavenly Father*'—not thereby implying that in such case He would not be *theirs*, since they, thus acting, would have denied the relationship; for our Lord says often, '*My Father*' (as ver. 19), when no such reason can be assigned. On the declaration itself we may observe that the Christian stands in a middle point, between a mercy received and a mercy which he yet needs to receive. Sometimes the first is urged upon him as an argument for showing mercy—'forgiving one another, as Christ forgave you' (Col. iii. 13; Ephes. iv. 32); sometimes the last, 'Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy' (Matt. v. 7); 'With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful' (Ps. xviii. 25); 'Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven' (Luke vi. 37); while sometimes the other and more menacing side of the same truth is urged, as in this present parable, and in words recorded by St. Mark, 'But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses' (xi. 26; cf. Jam. ii. 13); and in the same way by the Son of Sirach (xxviii. 3, 4), 'One man beareth hatred against another, and doth he seek pardon from the Lord? he showeth no mercy to a man who is like himself, and doth he ask forgiveness of his own sins?' And thus, while he must ever look back on a mercy received as the source and motive of the mercy which he shows, he looks forward as well to the mercy which he yet needs, and which he is assured that the merciful, according to what Bengel beautifully calls the *benigna talio* of the kingdom of God, shall obtain, as a new provocation to its abundant exercise. Tholuck has some good remarks upon this point:

[1] Ἀπὸ τῶν καρδιῶν = ἐκ ψυχῆς, Ephes. vi. 6; 1 Macc. viii. 27; to the exclusion, not merely of acts of hostility, but also of all μνησικακία, or remembrance of wrongs. H. de Sto. Victore: 'That he may neither wreak vengeance in act, nor keep back malice in his heart;' and Jerome: 'The Lord added, from your hearts, that He might dispel all pretence of a feigned peace.'

From the circumstance that mercy is here [Matt. v. 7] promised as the recompense of anterior mercy on our part, it might indeed be inferred that under "merciful" we are to imagine such as have not yet in any degree partaken of mercy; but this conclusion would only be just on the assumption that the divine compassion consisted in an isolated act, of which man could be the object only once for all in his life. Seeing, however, that it is an act which extends over the whole life of the individual, and reaches its culminating point in eternity, it behoves us to consider the compassion of God for man, and man for his brethren, as reciprocally calling forth and affording a basis for one another.'[1] And a difficulty which Origen suggests, finds its explanation here.[2] He asks, *where in time* are we to place the transactions shadowed forth in this parable? There are reasons on the one hand why they should be placed at the end of this present dispensation; since at what other time does God take account with his servants for condemnation or acquittal? while yet, if placed there, what further opportunity would the forgiven servant have for displaying the harshness and cruelty which he actually does display towards his fellow-servant? The difficulty disappears, when we no longer contemplate forgiveness as an isolated act, which must take place at some definite moment, and then is past and irrevocable; but regard it rather as ever going forward, as running parallel with and extending over the entire life of the redeemed, which, as it is a life of continual sin and shortcoming, so has need to be a life of continual forgiveness.[3]

[1] *Auslegung der Bergpredigt*, p. 93.

[2] *Comm. in Matt.* xviii.

[3] Fleury has a fine story, illustrative of this parable (*Hist. Eccles.* vol. ii. p. 334). Between two Christians at Antioch enmity had sprung up. After a while one of them desired to be reconciled, but the other, who was a priest, refused. While it thus fared with them, the persecution of Valerian began; and Sapricius, the priest, having boldly confessed himself a Christian, was on the way to death. Nicephorus met him, and again sued for peace, which was again refused. While he was seeking that peace which the other withheld, they arrived at the place of

execution. He that should have been the martyr was here terrified, offered to sacrifice to the gods, and, despite the entreaties of the other, did so, making shipwreck of his faith and of his soul; while Nicephorus, boldly confessing, stepped in his place, and received the crown which Sapricius lost. This story runs finely parallel with our parable. Before Sapricius could have had grace to confess Christ, he must have had his own ten thousand talents forgiven; but refusing to forgive a far lesser wrong, to put away the displeasure he had conceived on some infinitely lighter grounds against his brother, he forfeited all, *his* Lord was angry, withdrew from him his grace, and suffered him again to be entangled in that kingdom of darkness from which he had once been delivered. We are further reminded well that the unforgiving temper, apart from all outward wrong, itself constitutes the sin of the unmerciful servant So Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.* i. qu. 25): 'He would not forgive; . . . by this we must understand that he held such feeling towards him as to desire his punishment.'

PARABLE IX.

THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD.

MATTHEW xx. 1–16.

THIS parable stands in closest connexion with the words which went immediately before—that is, with the four concluding verses of the chapter preceding, and can only be rightly understood by their help; which being so, the actual division of chapters is here peculiarly unfortunate; often causing, as it does, the parable to be explained with no reference to the context, and with no attempt to trace the circumstances out of which it grew. And yet on a right tracing of this connexion, and the showing how it sprang out of, and was in fact an answer to, Peter's question, 'What shall we have?' the success of the exposition will mainly depend. It is a parable which stands only second to that of the Unjust Steward in the number and wide divergence from one another of the explanations that have been proposed for it; and only second to that, if indeed second, in the difficulties which it presents.[1] These Chrysostom states clearly and strongly; though few will be wholly satisfied with his solution of them. There is, first, the difficulty of bringing it into harmony with the saying by which it is introduced and concluded, and which it is plainly intended to illustrate; and secondly, there is the moral difficulty, the same which the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son presents,—namely, how can one who is himself a member of the kingdom of God 'be held,' as Chrysostom terms it, 'by that

[1] See the *Theol. Stud. u. Krit.* 1847, pp. 396–416.

lowest of all passions, envy, and an evil eye,' grudging in his heart the favours shown to other members of that kingdom? or, if it be denied that the murmurers of this parable *are* members of that kingdom, how this denial is reconcilable with their having laboured all day long in the vineyard, and ultimately carrying away their own reward? And lastly, it is not easy, but most hard, to determine what is the drift and scope of the parable, its leading intention and purpose.

Of its many interpreters there are, first, those who see in the equal penny to all, the key to the whole matter, and for whom its lesson is this,—the equality of rewards in the kingdom of God.[1] This was Luther's explanation in his earlier works, though he afterwards saw reason to withdraw it. But however this may appear to agree with the parable,[2] it evidently agrees not at all with the saying which sums it up, and contains its moral: '*Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first;*'[3] for such an equality would be no reversing of the order of the first and last, but a setting of all upon a level.

[1] Augustine (*Serm.* 343): 'The penny is life eternal, which is alike for all;'—but without affirming equality in the kingdom of God; for all the stars, as he goes on to say, are in the same firmament, yet 'one star differeth from another star in glory' (splendor dispar, cælum commune). Cf. *De Sanct. Virgin.* 26; *In Joh. Evang.* tract. lxvii. § 2; Tertullian, *De Monog.* 10; Bernard, *In Ps. Qui habitat, Serm.* ix. 4; Ambrose, *Ep.* vii. 11; Gregory the Great, *Moral.* iv. 36.

[2] Yet Spanheim (*Dub. Evang.* vol. iii. p. 785) is not easily answered, when against this he says: 'It is impossible to understand the penny as meaning eternal life, for it is given also to the murmurers and the envious, it does not satisfy those who receive it, and it is given to men who are bidden to depart from the Lord (ver. 14). But life eternal is not the portion of murmurers, nor of the envious, neither does it draw men away from God, but joins them with him, nor is it given unto any to whom it does not bring full satiety of joy.'

[3] Fritzsche, indeed, finds no difficulty in giving the sense of the gnome thus: 'They who have been the last to join themselves to the Messiah shall be reckoned with those that were first, and they who followed Him first shall be reckoned with the last:' but this is doing evident violence to the words.

Others affirm that the parable is meant to set forth this truth,—that God does not regard the length of time during which men are occupied in his work, but the fidelity and strenuous exertion with which they accomplish that work.[1] Of this explanation there will presently be occasion to speak more at large; it will be enough now to observe that if everything had turned on the fact that the last-hired labourers had worked more strenuously than the first, it is impossible that all mention of this circumstance should have been omitted.

The same is Calvin's explanation; a little modified, it is true; but without substantial alterations. There is a warning here that we be not over-confident, because we may have begun well;[2] lest (though this is not his illustration), like the hare in the fable, waxing careless and remiss, we let others pass us by; and so, from the first, fall into the hindmost rank: that no one begin to boast, or consider the battle won, till he put off his armour (1 Kin. xx. 11). But to him also it may be replied that the parable affords no warrant for the assumption that the labourers first engaged had slackened their exertions during the latter part of the day.

There are others who find in the successive hours at which the different bands of labourers were hired, the leading feature of the parable. And these interpreters may be again subdivided, according as they regard these hours as successive ages in the world's history, or successive periods in the lives of individual men. There are, first, those who, as Irenæus,[3]

[1] So Maldonatus: 'The end of the parable is that the reward of eternal life answers, not to the time which a man has laboured, but to his labour and the work he has done;' and Kuinoel the same.

[2] 'The aim of the Lord was none other than by continual incentives to spur his followers to progress. For we know that sluggishness is generally born of excessive confidence.' If we found, indeed, the gnome by itself, we might then say that such was his purpose in it: see the admirable use which Chrysostom (*In Matt. Hom.* 67, ad finem) makes of it, in this regard.

[3] *Con. Hær.* iv. 36. 7. His immediate object is to assert the unity of the Old Dispensation and the New, that one purpose ran through, and one

Origen, and Hilary, see here a history of the different summonses to a work of righteousness which God has made to men from the beginning of the world,—to Adam,—to Noah,—to Abraham,—to Moses,—and lastly to the Apostles, bidding them, each in his time and order, to go work in his vineyard. Of these labourers, all the earlier lived during weaker and more imperfect dispensations, and underwent, therefore, a harder toil, as having less abundant gifts of the Spirit, less clear knowledge of the grace of God in Christ, to sustain them, than the later called, the members of the Christian Church. Their heavier toil, therefore, might aptly be set forth by a longer period of work, and that at the more oppressive time of the day (cf. Acts xv. 10); while the Apostles, and the other faithful called into God's vineyard at the eleventh hour ('the last time,' or, 'the last *hour*,' as St. John [1 Ep. ii. 18] terms it), and partakers of the larger freer grace now given in Christ, had by comparison a lighter burden to endure. But of these interpreters, it may be fairly asked, *When* could that murmuring have taken place, even supposing God's servants of one age *could* thus grudge because of the larger grace bestowed upon others? This could not have been in their lifetime; for before the things were even revealed which God had prepared for his people that came after, they were in their graves. It is still less conceivable as finding place in the day of judgment, or in the kingdom of love made perfect. Unless, then, we quite explain away the murmuring, accepting Chrysostom's ingenious solution of it, that it is only brought in to enhance the greatness of the things freely given in the last days, things so glorious, that those earlier and more scantily endowed might be tempted to murmur, comparing themselves with their more richly furnished successors,—this explanation seems untenable; as, were it worth while, much more might be urged against it.

God ordered, them both; the same who called patriarchs and prophets in the earlier hours calling Apostles in the last. He makes many of the parables, and some with better right than this, to teach this lesson.

The other subdivision of this group of interpreters see in the different hours at which the labourers are hired, different periods in men's lives, at which they enter on the Lord's work; affirming that its purpose is to encourage those who have entered late on his service, now to labour heartily, not allowing the consciousness of past negligences to make slack their hands; since they too, if only they will labour with their might for the time, long or short, which remains, shall receive with the others a full reward. This is, in the main, Chrysostom's view:[1] but with a free admission that, under certain limitations, such encouragement may be drawn from the parable, it is another thing to say that this is the admonishment which it is especially meant to convey. In what living connexion would the parable then stand with what went before, with Peter's question, or with the temper out of which that question grew, and which this teaching of the Lord was intended to meet and to correct?

But nearer to the truth than all these explanations is that which finds here a warning and a prophecy of the causes which would lead to the rejection of the Jews, the first called into the vineyard of the Lord;—these causes being mainly their proud appreciation of themselves and of their own work; their displeasure at seeing the Gentiles, aliens so long, put on the same footing, admitted to equal privileges, with themselves in the kingdom of God:[2] and an agreement or

[1] And also Jerome's (*Comm. in Matt.*): 'The labourers of the first hour seem to me to be Samuel and Jeremiah and John the Baptist, who can say with the Psalmist, Thou art my God even from my mother's womb. The labourers of the third hour, those who began to serve God in their youth. Of the sixth hour, those who have taken on them the yoke of Christ in their maturity. Of the ninth, those who are verging on old age. Of the eleventh, those who are in the extremity of age. And yet all alike receive their reward, although their labour is different.'

[2] Cocceius: 'Here is hinted the future murmuring and indignation of the Jews against the Gentiles: for the presumption of the Jews is, that in the kingdom of Christ the Gentiles should be subject to themselves, and ought not to attain their reward, unless they also have laboured as the Jews laboured for many centuries.' See, in favour of this explanation, Greswell, *Expos. of the Par.* vol. iv. p. 370, sqq.

covenant being made with the first hired, and none with those subsequently engaged, has been urged as confirming this view. No interpretation of the parable can be true which excludes this application of it. It *was* notably fulfilled in the Jews; while yet this fulfilment of it was only one fulfilment out of many; for our Lord's words are so rich in meaning, so touch the central heart of things, that they are continually finding their fulfilment. Had this, however, been his primary meaning, we should expect to hear of but two bands of labourers, the first hired and the last: all who come between would only serve to confuse and perplex. The solution sometimes given of this objection,—that the successive hirings represent successive summonses to the Jews; first, under Moses and Aaron; secondly, under David and the kings; thirdly, under the Maccabæan chiefs and priests; and lastly, in the time of Christ and his Apostles; or that these are severally Jews, Samaritans, and proselytes of greater and less strictness,—seems devised merely to escape from an embarrassment, and only witnesses for its existence without removing it.

Better then to say that the parable is directed against a wrong temper and spirit of mind, which, indeed, was notably manifested in the Jews, but one against which all men in possession of spiritual privileges, have need to be, and herein are, warned: this warning being primarily addressed not to them, but to the Apostles, as the foremost workers in the Christian Church, the earliest called to labour in the Lord's vineyard—'*the first*,' both in time, and in toil and pains. They had seen the rich young man (xix. 22) go sorrowful away, unable to abide the proof by which the Lord had mercifully revealed to him how strong the bands by which the world was holding him still. They (for Peter here, as so often, is spokesman for all) would fain know what *their* reward should be, who had done this very thing from which he had shrunk, and forsaken all for the Gospel's sake (ver. 27). The Lord answers them first and fully, that they and as many as should do the same for his sake, should reap an abundant

reward (ver. 28, 29). But for all this the question itself, 'What shall we have?' was not a right one; it put their relation to their Lord on a wrong footing; there was a tendency in it to bring their obedience to a calculation of so much work, so much reward. There lurked too a certain self-complacency in it. That spirit of self-exalting comparison of ourselves with others, which is so likely to be stirring, when we behold any signal failure on their part, was obscurely at work in them; so obscurely that they may have been hardly conscious of it themselves; but He who knew what was in man, saw with a glance into the depths of Peter's heart, and having replied to the direct question, 'What shall we have?' went on to crush the evil in the bud, and before it should unfold itself further. 'Not of works, lest any man should boast;' this was the truth which they were in danger of missing, and which He would now by the parable enforce; and if nothing of works, but all of grace for all, then no glorifying of one over another, no grudging of one against another, no claim as of right upon the part of any.[1] In that question of theirs there spake out something of the spirit of the hireling, and it is against this spirit that the parable is directed, which might justly be entitled, *On the nature of rewards in the kingdom of God*,—the whole finding a most instructive commentary in Rom. iv. 1–4, which supplies not a *verbal*, but more deeply interesting, a *real* parallel to the parable before us.

So far as it is addressed to Peter, and in him to all true believers, it is rather a warning against what *might* be, if they

[1] Gerhard: 'Just at the end, because the confidence of Peter and the rest was not unknown to Christ, and there was reason to fear that on the strength of this magnificent promise they might exalt themselves above others, He brings this passage to a close with a weighty sentence, by which He desires to restrain them, and especially Peter, in sobriety and fear: "Many," He says, "that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first." . . . Refrain therefore from all high thoughts, refrain from considering arrogantly of yourselves.' So also Olshausen, who refers to ver. 20–28 of this chapter (cf. Mark x. 35), as an evidence how liable the promise (xix. 28) was to be perverted and misunderstood by the old man not yet wholly mortified in Apostles themselves.

were not careful to watch against it, than a prophecy of what *would* be.[1] For we cannot conceive of him who dwells in love as allowing himself in envious and grudging thoughts against any of his brethren, because, though they have entered later on the service of God, or been engaged in a lighter labour, they will yet be sharers with him of the same heavenly reward; or refusing to welcome them gladly to all the blessings and privileges of the communion of Christ. Least of all can we imagine him so to forget that he also is saved by grace, as to allow such hateful feelings to come to a head, taking form and shape, which they do in the parable; or as justifying these to himself and to God, like the spokesman among the murmurers here. We cannot conceive this even here in our present imperfect state, much less in the perfected kingdom hereafter; for love 'rejoiceth in the truth,'[2] and the very fact of one so grudging against another would prove that he himself did not dwell in love, and therefore was under sentence of exclusion from that kingdom.[3] It is then a warning to the Apostles, and through them to all believers, of what might be, not a prophecy of what shall be for any who share in the final reward. They are taught that, however long continued their work, abundant their labours, yet without this charity to their brethren, this humility before God, they are nothing; —that pride and a self-complacent estimate of their work, like the fly in the precious ointment, would spoil the work, however great it might be, since that work stands only in

[1] Bengel: 'With respect to the Apostles, it is not a prediction but a warning.'

[2] In the beautiful words of Leighton (*Prælect.* 6): 'Envy is far from the heavenly choir, and there reigns there the most perfect charity by which everyone at the same time as by his own is possessed and made happy by the felicity of his fellow, rejoicing in that as in his own. Whence there is among them a certain infinite reflection and multiplication of happiness, like as would be the splendour of a hall shining with gold and gems, and a full assembly of kings and magnates, and whose walls were covered on every side with the most luminous mirrors.'

[3] Gregory the Great says excellently (*Hom.* 19 *in Evang.*) on this murmuring: 'No one who murmurs receives the kingdom of heaven; no one who receives it will be able to murmur.

humility; and from first they would fall to last.—There is then this difference between the parabolic framework, and the truth of which it is the exponent, that while the householder could not with equity altogether deprive the first labourers of their hire, notwithstanding their pride and discontent, they therefore receiving their wages, and only punished by a severe rebuke, yet the lesson taught to Peter, and through him to us all, is, that the first may be altogether last; that those who stand forward as chief in labour, yet, if they forget withal that the reward is of grace and not of works, and begin to boast and exalt themselves above their fellow-labourers, may *altogether* lose the things which they have wrought;[1] while those who seem last, may yet, by keeping their humility, be acknowledged first and foremost in the day of God. With these preliminary remarks, which the difficulties of the parable have made it necessary to draw out at some length, we may now proceed to consider its details.

'*The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard:*' in other words, The manner of God's dealings with those whom He calls to the privilege of working in his Church is like to that of a householder, who should go out early in the morning to hire labourers.[2] Here as ever in the kingdom of heaven it is God who seeks his labourers, and not they who seek Him: 'You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you' (John xv. 16; Mark iii. 13; Luke v. 10; John i. 43; 1 Tim. i. 12). Every summons to a work in the heavenly vineyard is from the Lord. The original impulse is always his: all which is man's in the matter is, that he do not resist the summons, which it is his melancholy prerogative that he is able to do. It is 'a call,' according to the instructive Scriptural expression: but as in the natural world a call does

[1] Gregory the Great again (*Moral.* xix. 21): 'Everything which is done perishes if it is not anxiously preserved in humility.'

[2] Fleck: 'The comparison applies not to a single person, but to the whole action,'– a remark of frequent application.

not imply the exercise of force, may be obeyed or may be disregarded, so also is it in the spiritual.

'*And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.*'[1] The different footing upon which the different bands of labourers went to their work, would scarcely have been so expressly noted, if no signification were to be found therein. An agreement was made by these first-hired labourers before they entered on their labour, the same which Peter would have made, 'What shall we have?'—while those subsequently engaged went in a more simple spirit, relying on the householder's assurance that whatever was right, they should receive. Have we here already a hint of that wrong spirit on the part of some, which presently comes to a head (ver. 11, 12); on the part of others, a truer spirit of humble waiting upon the Lord, in full confidence that He will give far more than his servants can desire or deserve, that He is not unrighteous to forget any labour of love which is wrought for Him?[2]

At the third, at the sixth, and at the ninth hour,—or at nine in the morning, at midday, and at three in the afternoon,[3]

[1] A denarius, a Roman silver coin, which passed current as equal to the Greek drachm, though in fact some few grains lighter. It was $= 8\frac{1}{2}d.$ at the latter end of the Commonwealth, afterwards something less, of our money. It was not an uncommon, though a liberal, day's pay (see Tob. v. 14). It was the daily pay of a Roman legionary (Tacitus, *Ann.* iii. 17. 26; Pliny, *H. N.* xxxiii. 3). Morier, in his *Second Journey through Persia*, p. 265, mentions having noted in the market-place at Hamadan a custom like that assumed in the parable:—'Here we observed every morning before the sun rose, that a numerous band of peasants were collected with spades in their hands, waiting to be hired for the day to work in the surrounding fields. This custom struck me as a most happy illustration of our Saviour's parable, particularly when passing by the same place late in the day, we still found others standing idle, and remembered his words, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" as most applicable to their situation; for on putting the very same question to them, they answered us, "Because no man hath hired us."'

[2] Thus Bernard, in a passage (*In Cant. Serm.* xvi. 4) containing many interesting allusions to this parable: 'The Jew relies on the compact of an agreement, I on the good pleasure of his will.'

[3] These would not, except just at the equinoxes, be exactly the hours,

—the householder again went into the market-place,[1] and those whom he found waiting there, sent into his vineyard; incidents which call for no remark, as first and last are the only ones on whom the stress of the parable is found ultimately to rest. '*And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?*' All activity out of Christ, all labour that is not labour in his Church, is in his sight a '*standing idle.*' '*They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us.*' There lay a certain amount of implied rebuke in the question, '*Why stand ye idle?*' which this answer shall clear away; for it belongs to the idea of the parable, that their explanation should be regarded as perfectly satisfactory. It is not then in a Christian land, where men grow up under sacramental obligations, with the pure word of God sounding in their ears, that this answer could be given; or at least, only in such woful instances as that which, alas! our own land at the present affords, where in the bosom of the Church multitudes have been allowed to grow up ignorant of the blessings which her communion affords, and the responsibilities which this lays upon them; and even in *their* mouths there would only be a partial truth in this, '*No man hath hired us;*' since even they cannot be *altogether* ignorant of their Christian vocation. Only when the kingdom of God is

for the Jews, as well as the Greeks and Romans, divided the natural day, that between sunrise and sunset, into twelve equal parts (John xi. 9), which parts must of course have been considerably longer in summer than in winter; for though the difference between the longest and the shortest day is not so great in Palestine as with us, yet it is by no means trifling; the longest day is of $14^h\ 12^m$ duration, the shortest of $9^h\ 48^m$, with a difference therefore of $4^h\ 24^m$, so that an hour on the longest day would be exactly 22^m longer than an hour on the shortest. The equinoctial hours did not come into use until the fourth century (see the *Dict. of Gr. and Roman Antt.* s. v. *Hora*, p. 485). Probably the day was also divided into the four larger parts here indicated, just as the Roman night into four watches, and indeed the Jewish no less: the four divisions of the latter are given in a popular form, Mark xiii. 35 (see Schoettgen, *Hor. Heb.* vol. i. p. 136).

[1] Maldonatus: 'The whole world which is outside the Church.'

first set up in a land, enters as a new and hitherto unknown power, could any with full truth reply, '*No man hath hired us*:—if we have been living in disobedience to God, it has been because we were ignorant of Him; if we were serving Satan, it was because we knew no other master and no better service.'

While then the excuse which these labourers plead, appertains not to them who, growing up within the Church, have despised to the last, or nearly to the last, God's repeated biddings to go work in his vineyard; while the unscriptural corollary cannot be appended to the parable,[1] that it matters little at what time of men's lives they enter heartily upon his service, how long they despise his vows which have been upon them from the beginning; yet one would not therefore deny that there is such a thing even in the Christian Church

[1] The Author of a modern Latin essay, *De Serâ Resipiscentiâ*, desirous to rescue the parable from such dangerous abuse, urges that it should have been otherwise framed, if such were its doctrine: 'He ought then to have said: The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. And he found such, and made them very great promises, but they rejected his offers, and preferred to remain in the market-place in order to play and drink. At the third hour he returned, and made them the same offers, beseeching them more earnestly, but in vain. The same did he at the sixth hour, and at the ninth, but his offers and promises were always fruitless. Nay, the men even received him badly, and rudely told him that they did not wish to work for him. But not even so was he offended, but returned when only one hour of the day remained, and offered them the same sum as in the morning. Then the men, seeing that they could earn so great a sum by the labour of a moment, at last suffered themselves to be persuaded, looking especially at this, that the day was nearly spent before they came into the vineyard.' Augustine (*Serm.* lxxxvii. 6) has the same line of thought: 'Did the men who were hired for the vineyard, when the master of the house came out to them, to hire those whom he found at the third hour . . . did they say: We are not coming except at the sixth hour? or did those whom he found at the sixth hour say: We are not coming except at the ninth hour. . . . As just as much is to be given to all alike, why are we to have more toil?—What He will give, and what He will do, it rests with him to determine. Do thou come when thou art called.' Cf. Gregory of Nazianzum, *Orat.* xl. 20, against those who used this parable as an argument for deferring baptism.

as men being called,—or to speak more correctly, since they were called long before,—as men obeying the call and entering the Lord's vineyard, at the third, or sixth, or ninth, or even the eleventh hour. Only their case will be parallel not to that of any of these labourers—in regard of being able to make the same excuse as they did, but rather to that of the son, who, bidden to go work in his father's vineyard, at first refused, but afterwards repented and went (Matt. xxi. 28); and one of these, instead of clearing himself as respects the past, which these labourers do, will humble himself most deeply, while he considers all his neglected opportunities and the long-continued despite which he has done to the Spirit of grace. Yet while thus none can plead, '*No man hath hired us*,' in a land where the Christian Church has long been established, and the knowledge of Christ more or less brought within the reach of all, the parable is not therefore without its application in such; since there also will be many entering into the Lord's vineyard at different periods, even to a late one, of their lives; and who, truly repenting their past unprofitableness, and not attempting to excuse it, may find their work, be it brief or long, graciously accepted now, and may share hereafter in the full rewards of the kingdom.[1] For in truth time belongs not to the kingdom of God. Not 'How much hast thou done?' but 'What art thou now?' will be the great question of the last day. Of course we must never forget that all which men have *done* will greatly affect what they *are*; yet still the parable is a protest against the whole *quantitative* appreciation of men's works, as distinct

[1] This view is supported by Leo the Great (*De Voc. Omn. Gent.* i. 17): 'Without doubt the men who were sent into the vineyard at the eleventh hour, and joined the others who had toiled the whole day, prefigure their lot, whom, to recommend the excellency of grace, at the close of day and the end of life, the Divine indulgence rewards, not as paying a price for their labour, but as outpouring the riches of its goodness upon those of whom it has made election without works; that they also who have sweated in much labour and yet have received no more than the last-comers, may understand that they have received a gift of grace, and not a reward for their works.'

from the *qualitative*, against all which would make the works the end, and man the means, instead of the man the end, and the works the means—against that scheme which, however unconsciously, lies at the root of so many of the confusions in our theology at this day.[1] Against all these the words of the householder, '*Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive*,' are a living protest.

'*So when even was come*' (cf. Ps. civ. 23; Judg. xix. 16), '*the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.*' This householder will fulfil strictly the precept of the law; the hired labourer shall not have his payment deferred till to-morrow: 'At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it' (Deut. xxiv. 15; cf. Lev. xix. 13; Job vii. 2; Mal. iii. 5; Jam. v. 4; Tob. iv. 14). Christ is the '*steward*,' or overseer rather, set over all God's house

[1] This mechanical, as opposed to the dynamic, idea of righteousness, is carried to the extremest point in the Chinese theology. Thus in that remarkable *Livre des récompenses et des peines*, the mechanical, or to speak more truly, the arithmetical, idea of righteousness comes out with all possible distinctness. For example, p. 124: 'To become immortal a man must have amassed three thousand merits and eight hundred virtuous actions.' How glorious, on the other hand, are Thauler's words upon the way in which men may have restored to them 'the years which the canker-worm has eaten': 'We may here inquire by what means a man can ever recover lost time, since there is no moment so brief and so fleeting that we do not owe it to God our Creator in its entirety, and with all our virtue and ability. But on this side there is a most healthful counsel offered us. Let a man turn himself with all his powers, lowest and highest alike, from all consideration of space and time, and let him betake himself to that Now of eternity, where God in his essence exists in an enduring Now. There neither is anything past nor future. There the beginning and end of all time are present. There, that is to say in God, all that was lost is found. And those who make it their custom to merge themselves yet more often in God, and to dwell in Him, these become rich even to excess, nay, they find more than they can lose. . . Lastly, everything that has been neglected, everything that has been lost, in the most precious treasury of the Passion of the Lord, they can find and recover.'

(Heb. iii. 6; John v. 27; Matt. xi. 27). The whole economy of salvation has been put into his hands, and as part of this the distribution of rewards (Rev. ii. 7, 10, 17, 28, &c.). The last hired, those who came in without any agreement made, the labourers of the eleventh hour, are the first to be paid. '*They received every man a penny.*' Here is encouragement—not to delay entering on God's service till late in our lives; for everywhere in Scripture there waits a marked blessing on early piety—but encouragement for those who have so done to work for the time which remains heartily and with their might. Misgivings concerning the acceptance of their work do not make men work the more strenuously; on the contrary, go far to cut the nerves of all exertion. There is much here to dispel such misgivings in those who would be most likely to feel them: let them labour in hope; they too shall be sharers in a full salvation.

It may be securely inferred that all between the last and the first hired received the penny as well; though it is the first hired alone who remonstrate, as those in whose case the injustice, for so it seemed to them, appeared the most flagrant. To assume, with Chrysostom, Maldonatus, Hammond, Waterland, and Olshausen, that these first hired had been doing their work negligently by comparison, while the last hired, such for instance as a Paul, whom Origen, quoting 1 Cor. xv. 10, suggests, had done it with their might, and had in fact accomplished as much in their hour as the others in their day, is to assume that of which there is no slightest trace in the narrative. And more than this, such an assumption effectually turns the edge of the parable, defeats its whole purpose and intention; for what does it teach, if it does not teach us this, namely that men may do and suffer much, infinitely more than others, and yet be rejected, while those others are received,—that first may be last, and last first? It is nothing strange that a rationalist like Kuinoel should adopt this explanation; for the whole matter is thus taken out of a higher spiritual world, and brought down to the commonest region of sense; since if one man accomplishes as

much in a single hour as another in twelve, there is nothing wonderful in his receiving an equal reward. Every difficulty disappears,—except indeed this, how the Lord should have cared to utter a parable for the justifying of so very ordinary a transaction; or, doing this, should have omitted that one thing which constituted the justification. But indeed this interpretation exactly brings us back to the level, from which to raise us the parable was spoken; we have a Jewish,[1] instead of an Evangelical, parable; an affirmation that the reward is not of grace, but of debt,—the very error which it was meant to rebuke and to reprove.

When the first hired received the same sum as the others and no more, '*they murmured against the goodman of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the*

[1] Singularly enough, exactly such a one is quoted by Lightfoot and others from the Talmud. Of a famous Rabbi, who died young, it is asked, 'To what was R. Bon Bar Chaija like? To a king who hired many labourers, among whom there was one hired who performed his task surpassingly well. What did the king? He took him aside, and walked with him to and fro. When even was come, those labourers came, that they might receive their hire, and he gave him a complete hire with the rest. And the labourers murmured, saying, "We have laboured hard all the day, and this man only two hours, yet he hath received as much wages as we." The king saith to them, "He hath laboured more in those two hours than you in the whole day." So R. Bon plied the law more in eight-and-twenty years than another in a hundred years.' Cf. the *Spicilegium* of L. Capellus, p. 28.—Von Hammer (*Fundgruben d. Orients*, vol. i. p. 157) quotes from the *Sunna*, or collection of Mahomet's traditional sayings, what reads like a distorted image of this parable. The Jew, the Christian, the Mahommedan are likened to three different bands of labourers, hired at different hours, at morning, midday, and afternoon. The latest hired receive in the evening twice as much as the others. It ends thus: 'The Jews and Christians will complain and say, "Lord, Thou hast given two carats to these, and only one to us." But the Lord will say, "Have I wronged you in your reward?" They answer, "No." "Then learn that the other is an overflowing of my grace."' See the same with immaterial differences in Gerock, *Christol. d. Koran*, p. 141; and Möhler (*Verm. Schrift.* vol. i. p. 355) mentions that, when claiming prophetic intimations of their faith in our Scriptures, the Mahommedans refer to this parable and its successive bands of labourers.

burden and heat of the day.'[1] These other, they would say, have been labouring not merely for a far shorter time; but when they entered on their tasks it was already the cool of the evening, when toil is no longer so oppressive, while we have borne the scorching heat of the middle noon. But here the perplexing dilemma meets us, Either these are of the number of God's faithful people;—how then can they murmur against Him, and grudge against their fellow-servants? or they are not of that number;—what then can we understand of their having laboured the whole day through in his vineyard, and actually carrying away at last the penny, the reward of eternal life? It is an unnatural way of escaping the difficulty, to understand '*Take that which is thine,*' as meaning, 'Take the damnation which belongs to thee, the just punishment of thy pride and discontent;' or as Basil the Great has it, 'Take the earthly reward, the "hundredfold" promised in this present time, but lose the "everlasting life," which thou shouldst have had in addition' (Matt. xix. 29).[2] Theophylact and others seek to mitigate as much as possible the guilt of their murmuring, and see in it no more than the expression of that surprise and admiration[3] which will escape from some, at the unexpected position that others, of perhaps small account here,

[1] Καύσων, the dry scorching east wind (Isai. xlix. 10; Ezek. xix. 12; Jam. i. 11), so fatal to all vegetable life, 'the wind from the wilderness' (Hos. xiii. 15), of which Jerome says (*Com. in Os.* iii. 11): 'Καύσωνα, *i.e.* dryness, or the burning wind which is the bane of flowers, and wastes everything that buds;' 'the scorching heat,' as it is rendered in the Revised Version = καῦμα τῆς ἡμέρας (2 Kin. iv. 5). It has much in common with, though it is not altogether so deadly as, the desert wind Sam or Samiel, which is often fatal to life; and whose effects Venema (*Comm. in Ps.* xci. 6) thus describes: 'Mixed with poisoned particles the wind penetrates our inmost parts with its poisoned heat, and bears with it most instant and agonizing destruction. Men's bodies are of a sudden attacked with loathsome disease and become putrid.' A grand passage in Palgrave's *Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia* describes the terrors of a simoom.

[2] *Reg. Brev. Tract. Interr.* 255, 259.

[3] Bellarmine: 'It seems to signify wonder rather than complaint.'

will occupy in the future kingdom of glory.[1] But the expression of their discontent is too strong, and the rebuke that it calls out too severe, to admit of an extenuation such as this. Better to say that no analogy will be found for this murmuring in the future world of glory;—and only where there is a large admixture of the old corruption, in the present world of grace. There is here rather a teaching by contraries; as thus, 'Since you cannot conceive such a spirit as that here held up before you, and which you feel to be so sinful and hateful, finding room in the perfected kingdom of God, check betimes its beginnings; check all inclinations to look grudgingly at your brethren, who, having lingered and loitered long, have yet found a place beside yourselves in the kingdom of grace, and are sharers in the same spiritual privileges;[2] or to look down upon and despise those who occupy a less important field of labour, who are called in the providence of God to endure and suffer less than yourselves: repress all inclinations to pride yourselves on your own doings, as though they gave you a claim of right upon God, instead of accepting all of his undeserved mercy, and confessing that you as well as others must be saved by grace and by grace alone.

On the fact that the murmurers actually receive their penny, a Roman Catholic expositor ingeniously remarks that

[1] So Gregory the Great (*Hom.* 19 *in Evang.*), though with particular reference to the saints of the Old Testament: 'This is as if to have murmured because the fathers of old before the coming of the Lord were not brought unto the kingdom; for these lived rightly for the receiving of the kingdom, and yet their receiving of the kingdom was long delayed.' Origen in the same spirit quotes Heb. xi. 39, 40.

[2] There are many interesting points of comparison, as Jerome has observed, between this parable and that of the Prodigal Son; and chiefly between the murmuring labourers in this, and the elder brother in that. They had borne the burden and heat of the day—he had served his father these many years; they grudged to see the labourers of the eleventh hour made equal with themselves—he to see the Prodigal received into the full blessings of his father's house; the lord of the vineyard remonstrates with them for their narrow-heartedness—and in like manner the father with him.

the denarius or penny was of different kinds; there was the double, the treble, the fourfold; that of brass, of silver, and of gold. The Jew (for he applies the parable to Jew and Gentile) received what was his, his penny of the meaner metal, his earthly reward, and with that went his way; but the Gentile the golden penny, the spiritual reward, grace and glory, admission into the perfected kingdom of God. Ingenious as this is, no one will accept it as a fair explanation of the difficulty; and yet it may suggest valuable considerations. The penny *is* very different to the different receivers; *objectively* the same, *subjectively* it is very different; it is in fact to every one exactly what he will make it.[1] What the Lord said to Abraham, He says to each and to all, 'I am thy exceeding great reward;' and He has no other reward to impart to any save only this, namely Himself. To 'see Him as He is,' this is his one reward, the penny which is common to all. But they whom these murmuring labourers represent had been labouring for something else besides the knowledge and enjoyment of God, with an eye to some other reward, to something on account of which they could glory in them-

[1] Thus Aquinas, in answer to the question whether there will be degrees of glory in the heavenly world, replies that in one sense there will, in another there will not: 'It happens that one man has more perfect enjoyment of God than another because the one is better disposed and regulated for the enjoyment of him;'—and again: 'Virtue will be like a material disposition, proportioned to the grace and glory to be received.' There is *one* vision of God; but there are very different capacities for enjoying that vision, as is profoundly expressed by the circles concentric, but ever growing smaller and thus nearer to the centre of light and life, in the *Paradiso* of Dante. Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* lxxii. 1) carries yet further this of the one vision of God for all: he compares it to the light which gladdens the healthy eye, but torments the diseased (non mutatus, sed mutatum).—It was a favourite notion with the Mystics that God would not put forth a twofold power to punish and reward, but the same power acting differently on different natures; as, to use their own illustration, the same heat hardens the clay and softens the wax. The Zend-Avesta supplies a parallel: All, it is there said, in the world to come will have to pass through the same stream; but this stream will be as warm milk to the righteous, while to the wicked it will be as molten brass.

selves, and glory over others. It was not merely to have *much* which they desired, but to have *more* than others; not to grow together with the whole body of Christ, but to get before and beyond their brethren:[1] and therefore the penny, because common to all, did not seem enough, while in fact it was to each what he would make it. For if the vision of God shall constitute the blessedness of the coming world, then they whose spiritual eye is most enlightened, will drink in most of his glory; then, since only like can know like, all advances which are here made in humility, in holiness, in love, are a polishing of the mirror that it may reflect more distinctly the divine image, a purging of the eye that it may see more clearly the divine glory, an enlarging of the vessel that it may receive more amply of the divine fulness; just as, on the other hand, all pride, all self-righteousness, all sin of every kind, whether it stop short with impairing, or end by altogether destroying, the capacities for receiving from God, is in its degree a staining of the mirror, a darkening of the eye, a narrowing of the vessel.[2] In the present case, where

[1] The true feeling is expressed by Augustine: 'The inheritance in which we are co-heirs with Christ is not diminished by the multitude of sons, nor does it become smaller by the number of the sharers in it. But it is as large to many as to few, as large to each one as to all together;' and in a sublime passage, *De Lib. Arbit.* ii. 14, where of Truth, the heavenly bride, he exclaims: 'She receives all her lovers, and they are in nowise jealous of each other; she is open to all, and is chaste to each;' and by Gregory, who says: 'He who desires to escape the fires of jealousy, let him seek that love, which no number of sharers in it ever narrows.' The same is beautifully expressed by Dante, *Purgat.* 15, beginning,

> Com' esser puote che un ben distributo
> In più posseditor faccia più ricchi
> Di sè, che se da pochi è posseduto?

'How can it be that a good distributed makes the more possessors richer in it, than if it is possessed by few?'—*Butler.*

[2] Bellarmine (*De Æter. Felic. Sanct.* v.): 'The penny signifies eternal life; but just as the same sun is seen more clearly by the eagle than by other birds, and the same fire warms those close to it better than those who are far off, so in this same eternal life one will see more clearly and rejoice more joyously than another.'

pride and envy and self-esteem had found place, darkening the eye of the heart, the reward as a consequence seemed no reward; it did not appear enough;[1] instead of being exactly what each was willing, or rather had prepared himself, to make it.

'*But he answered one of them*,' the loudest and foremost as we may suppose in the utterance of his discontent, '*and said, Friend*,[2] *I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?*' '*Friend*' is commonly a word of address, as it would be among ourselves, from a superior to an inferior, and in Scripture is a word of an evil omen, seeing that, besides the present passage, it is the compellation used to the guest who wanted a wedding garment, and to Judas when he came to betray his Master (Matt. xxii. 12; xxvi. 50).—'*I do thee no wrong;*' he justifies his manner of dealing with them, as well as his sovereign right in his own things. They had put their claim on the footing of right, and on that footing they are answered. '*Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?*' (with which compare Rom. ix. 20–24; Isai. xxix. 16; xlv. 9); '*Is thine eye*[3] *evil, because I am good?* so long as I am just

[1] As Seneca has well said: 'He whose eyes are on the goods of another, is ill content with his own;'—and again: 'No one can at once grudge and be grateful.'

[2] 'Εταῖρε, in the Vulgate, Amice: but Augustine (*Serm.* lxxxvii. 3), Sodalis, which is better. Our 'fellow' contains too much of contempt in it, though else the most accurate rendering of all.

[3] Envy is ever spoken of as finding its expression from the eye, Deut. xv. 9; 1 Sam. xviii. 9 ('Saul *eyed* David'); Prov. xxiii. 6; xxviii. 22; Tob. iv. 7; Ecclus. xiv. 10; xxxi. 13; Mark vii. 22; indeed the word *invidia* says as much, being, as Cicero observes (*Tusc.* iii. 9), à nimis *intuendo* fortunam alterius. There lies in the expression the belief, one of the widest spread in the world, of the eye being able to put forth positive powers of mischief. Thus in Greek the ὀφθαλμὸς βάσκανος, and βασκαίνειν = φθονεῖν (see Bishop Lightfoot, *Ep. to the Galatians*, p. 127); in Italian, the mal-occhio; in French, the mauvais-œil; in Persius: *Urentes* oculi. See Becker, *Charicles*, vol. ii. p. 291. We have on the other hand the ἀγαθὸς ὀφθαλμός, the ungrudging eye (Ecclus. xxxii. 10, LXX).

to thee, may I not be good and liberal to others?' The solution of the difficulty that these complainers should get their reward and carry it away with them, has been already suggested, namely that, according to the human relations to which the parable must adapt itself, it would not have been consistent with equity to make them forfeit their own hire, notwithstanding the wrong feeling which they displayed. Yet we may say their reward vanished in their hands; and the sentences which follow sufficiently indicate that with God an absolute forfeiture might follow, nay, must necessarily follow, where this grudging, unloving, proud spirit has come to its full head; as much is affirmed in the words which immediately follow, '*So the last shall be first, and the first last.*' Many expositors have been sorely troubled how to bring these words into agreement with the parable; for in it '*first*' and '*last*' are all set upon the same footing: while here it is rather a reversing of places which is asserted: those who seemed highest, it is declared shall be set the lowest, and the lowest highest: when too we compare Luke xiii. 30, where the words recur, there can be no doubt that a total rejection of the '*first*,' the unbelieving Jews, accompanied with the receiving of the '*last*,' the Gentiles, into covenant, is declared. Origen, whom Maldonatus follows, finds an explanation in the fact that the '*last*' hired are the '*first*' in order of payment; but this is so trivial an advantage, if one at all, that the explanation must be dismissed. Moreover, the fact of the last hired being the first paid is evidently introduced for convenience-sake; if the first hired had been first paid, and, as would naturally follow, had then gone their way, they would not have seen that the others obtained the same penny as themselves, and so would have had no temptation to express their discontent. Neander[1] so entirely despairs of reconciling the parable with the words which introduce and finish it, that he proposes a desperate remedy, and one under the frequent application of which we should lose all confidence in the trustworthiness

[1] *Leben Jesu*, p. 196, note.

of the Evangelical records. He thinks the sentences and the parable to have been spoken on different occasions, and only by accident to have been here brought into connexion; and asserts that one must wholly pervert this weighty parable, to bring it through forced artifices into harmony with words which are alien to it. But if what has been observed above be correct, the saying is not merely in its place here, but is absolutely necessary to complete the moral, to express that which the parable did not, and, according to the order of human affairs, could not express,—namely, the *entire* forfeiture which would follow on the indulgence of such a temper as that displayed by the murmurers here.

There is more difficulty in the closing words, '*for many be called, but few chosen.*'[1] They are not hard in themselves, but hard in the position which they occupy. The connexion is easy and the application obvious, when they occur as the moral of the Marriage of the King's Son (Matt. xxii. 14); but here they have much perplexed those who will not admit entire rejection from the heavenly kingdom of those whom the murmuring labourers represent. Some explain, 'Many are called, but few have the peculiar favour shown to them, that, though their labour is so much less, their reward should be equal;' thus Olshausen, who makes the '*called*' and the '*chosen*' alike partakers of final salvation, but assumes that by these terms are signified lower and higher standings of men in the kingdom of heaven[2] (cf. Rev. xvii. 14). These last hired had, in his view, laboured more abundantly, but this their more abundant labour was to be

[1] It is not often that there is so felicitous an equivalent proverb in another language as that which the Greek supplies here; and which Clement of Alexandria has more than once adduced on the score of its aptness as a parallel:

Πολλοί τοι ναρθηκοφόροι, παῦροι δέ τε βάκχοι.

'Many wear Bacchus's badge, but few are his.'

[2] Thus Wolf also (*Curæ*, in loc.): 'The "called" and "chosen" here must not be considered as opposed to each other in kind, but as opposed in degree of happiness and dignity.'

referred to a divine election, so that the name '*chosen*' or elect well becomes them to whom such especial grace was given. But this assumption of larger labour upon their part mars and defeats the whole parable, and cannot for a moment be admitted. Others understand by the '*called*' some not expressly mentioned, who had refused altogether to work; in comparison with whom the '*chosen*,' those who at any hour had accepted the invitation, were so few, that the Lord could not bear that any of these should be shut out from his full reward. But the simplest interpretation seems to be: Many are called to work in God's vineyard, but few retain that humility, that entire submission to the righteousness of God, that utter abnegation of any claim as of right on their own part, which will allow them in the end to be partakers of his reward.[1]

[1] The term *reward*, to express the felicity which God will impart to his people, sometimes offends, seeming to bring back to a legal standing point, and to imply a claim, as of right, and not merely of grace, upon their part. But being of a scriptural term (Matt. v. 12, vi. 1; Luke vi. 35; 2 John 8; Rev. xxii. 12), there is no reason why we should shrink, and our Church has not shrunk, from its use; for we pray 'that we, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of Thee be plenteously *rewarded*.' Only let us understand what we mean by it. Aquinas says: 'A man may have some merit in God's sight, not, indeed, according to an unconditional relation of justice, but according to a certain presupposition of a divine ordinance;' and this is a satisfactory distinction. The reward *has* relation to the work, but this, as the early protesters against the papal doctrines of merits expressed it, according to a justitia *promissionis divinæ*, not a justitia *retributionis*. There is no meritum condignum, though Bellarmine sought to extort such from this very parable (see Gerhard, *Loc. Theol.* loc. xviii. 8, 114). When it is said, 'God is *not unrighteous* to forget your work and labour of love,' it is only saying, 'He is faithful,' or promise-keeping (οὐκ ἄδικος = πιστός: cf. 1 John i. 9; 1 Cor. x. 13; 1 Pet. iv. 19). Augustine (*Serm.* cx. 4): 'Not by owing, but by promising, did God make Himself a debtor.' In the reward there is a certain retrospect to the work done, but no proportion between them, except such as may have been established by the free appointment of the Giver, and the only claim is upon his promise. It is, as Fuller says (*Holy State*, iii. 25), 'a reward in respect of his promise; a gift, in respect of thy worthlessness; and yet the less thou lookest on it, the surer thou shalt find it, if labouring with thyself to

serve God for Himself, in respect of whom even heaven itself is but a sinister end;' for, in the words of St. Bernard: 'True charity seeks no reward, though a reward may follow it.' 'He is faithful that promised' —this, and nothing else, must remain always the ground of all expectations; and what these expectations are to be, and what they are not to be, this parable declares.—This subject of reward is well discussed in the *Supplement* to Herzog's *Real Encyclopädie*, s. v. Lohn.

PARABLE X.

THE TWO SONS.

MATTHEW xxi. 28-32.

OUR Lord had put back with another question (ver. 24, 25) the question (ver. 23) with which his adversaries had hoped either to silence Him, if He should decline to answer; or to obtain matter of accusation against Him, if He should give the answer which they expected: and now, becoming Himself the assailant, He commences that series of parables, in which, as in a glass held up before them, they might see themselves, the impurity of their hearts, their neglect of the charge laid upon them, their ingratitude for the privileges vouchsafed them, the aggravated guilt of that outrage against Himself which they were already meditating in their hearts. Yet even these, wearing as they do so severe and threatening an aspect, are not words of defiance, but of earnest tenderest love, spoken with the intention of turning them, if this were yet possible, from their purpose, of winning *them* also for the kingdom of God. The first parable, that of the Two Sons, goes not so deeply into the heart of the matter as the two that follow, and is rather retrospective, while those other are prophetic as well.

'*But what think ye?*' We have the same introduction to a longer discourse, xvii. 25—'*A certain man had two sons.*' Here, as at Luke xv. 11, are described, under the figure of two sons of one father, two great moral divisions of men, under one or other of which might be ranged almost all with

whom our blessed Lord in his teaching and preaching came in contact. Of one of these classes the Pharisees were specimens and representatives, though this class as well as the other will exist at all times. In this are included all who have sought a righteousness through the law, and by help of it have been preserved in the main from gross and open outbreakings of evil. In the second class, of which the publicans and harlots stand as representatives, are contained all who have thrown off the yoke, openly and boldly transgressed the laws of God, done evil as 'with both hands earnestly.' Now the condition of those first is of course far preferable; that righteousness of the law better than this open unrighteousness;—provided always that it be ready to give place to the righteousness of faith, when that appears; provided that it knows and feels its own incompleteness; which will ever be the case, where the attempt to keep the law has been truly and honestly made; the law will then have done its proper work, and have proved 'a schoolmaster to Christ.' But if this righteousness is satisfied with itself,—and this will be, where evasions have been sought out to escape the strictness of the requirements of the law; if, cold and loveless and proud, it imagines that it wants nothing, and so refuses to submit itself to the righteousness of faith, then far better that the sinner should have had his eyes open to perceive his misery and guilt, even though this had been by means of manifest and grievous transgressions, than that he should remain in this ignorance of his true condition, of all which is lacking to him still; just as it would be better that disease, *if in the frame*, should take a definite shape, so that it might be felt and acknowledged to be disease, and then met and overcome, than that it should be secretly lurking in, and pervading, the whole system; its very existence being denied by him the sources of whose life it was sapping. From this point of view St. Paul speaks, Rom. vii. 7–9; and this same lesson, that there is no such fault as counting we have no fault, is taught us throughout all Scripture. It is taught us in the bearing of the elder son towards his father and return-

ing brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke xv. 28–30); and again in the demeanour of the Pharisee who had invited Jesus to his house toward Him and toward the woman 'which was a sinner' (Luke vii. 36–50); and in that of another Pharisee, whose very prayers this spirit and temper made to be nothing worth (Luke xviii. 10; cf. 29–32).

'*And he came to the first and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard.*' This command, which we may compare with that of Matt. xx. 1–7, was the general summons made both by the natural law in the conscience, and also by the revealed law which came by Moses, that men should bring forth fruit unto God. This call the publicans and harlots, and all open sinners, manifestly neglected and despised. The son first bidden to go to the work '*answered and said, I will not.*'[1] The rudeness of the answer, the absence of any attempt to excuse his disobedience, are both characteristic. The representative of careless, reckless sinners, he has dismissed even the hypocrisies with which others cloke their disobedience; cares not to say, like those invited guests, 'I pray thee have me excused;' but flatly refuses to go. '*But afterward he repented and went.*' There came over him a better mind, even as we know that such under the preaching of the Baptist and afterwards of the Lord Himself came over many who before had stood out against God.

'*And he came to the second, and said likewise; and he answered and said, I go, sir.*'[2] The Scribes and Pharisees, as professing zeal for the law, set themselves in the way as though they would fulfil the command. But they said, and did not (Matt. xxiii. 2); the prophet Isaiah had long since described them truly (Matt. xv. 8; cf. Isai. xxix. 13), 'This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and

[1] Gerhard: 'The life of sinners is nothing but the actualizing of the cry and profession, "We will not do the will of God."'

[2] Ἐγὼ, *κύριε*. The readings here are various; *ναὶ κύριε*, *ὑπάγω κύριε*, and many more; all, however, easily traced up to transcribers wanting to amend a phrase which seemed to them incomplete. *Πορεύομαι*, *ἀπέρχομαι*, or some such word, must be supplied. See 1 Sam. iii. 4, 6; Gen. xxii. 1.

honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.' So was it here. When the marked time arrived, when the Baptist came to them '*in the way of righteousness*,' and summoned to an earnest repentance on the part of all, when it was needful to take decisively one side or the other, then when many hitherto openly profane were baptized, confessing their sins (Matt. iii. 5, 6), '*repented, and went*:' the real unrighteousness of the Pharisees, before concealed under show of zeal for the law, was clearly displayed: professing willingness to go, they '*went not*.'

To the Lord's question, '*Whether of them twain did the will of his father?*' his adversaries cannot plead inability to reply, as they had pleaded to a former question (ver. 27); they have no choice but to answer, though their answer condemns themselves. '*They say unto Him, The first:*' not, of course, that he did it absolutely well, but by comparison with the other. Then follows the application to themselves of the acknowledgment reluctantly wrung from them: '*Verily, I say unto you, That the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you*' (cf. Luke vii. 29, 37–50). In these words, '*go before you*,' or 'take the lead of you,' there is a gracious intimation that for them too the door of hope was open still, that as yet no irreversible doom excluded them from that kingdom: the others indeed had preceded them; but they might still follow, if they would. And why are they thus proving the last to enter into the kingdom, if indeed they shall enter it at all? '*For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not*.' An emphasis has been sometimes laid on the words, '*in the way of righteousness*,' as though they were brought in to aggravate the sin of the Pharisees, as though the Lord would say, 'The Baptist came, a pattern of that very righteousness of the law, in which you profess to exercise yourselves. He did not come, calling to the new life of the Gospel, of which I am the pattern, and which you might have misunderstood; he did not come, seeking to put new wine into the old bottles, but himself fulfilling that very form and pattern of righteous-

ness which you professed to have set before yourselves; became an earnest ascetic (Matt. ix. 11–14); separating himself from sinners; while yet you were so little hearty about *any* form of earnest goodness, that for all this he obtained no more acceptance with you than I have done. You found fault with him for the strictness of his life, as you find fault with Me for the condescension of mine (Matt. xi. 16–19). And this unbelief of yours was not merely for a time; but afterward, when God had set his seal to his mission, when *the publicans and the harlots believed him*, even then ye could not be provoked to jealousy: *ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.*'

In many copies, and some not unimportant ones, it is the son that is first spoken to, who promises to go, and afterwards disobeys; and the second who, refusing first, afterwards changes his mind, and enters on the work. Probably the order was thus reversed by transcribers, who thought that the application of the parable must be to the successive callings of Jews and Gentiles,[1] and that therefore the order of their calling should be preserved. The parable, however, does not in the first instance apply to the Jew and Gentile, but rather to the two bodies within the bosom of the Jewish Church. It is not said, '*the Gentiles*,' but '*the publicans and the harlots, go into the kingdom of heaven before you;*' while yet that former statement, if the parable had admitted (and if it had admitted, it must have required it), would have been a far stronger way of provoking them to jealousy (Acts

[1] So Origen, Chrysostom, and Athanasius: Jerome too, who quotes as a parallel to '*I go, sir*,' the words of the children of Israel at the giving of the law, 'All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient' (Exod. xxiv. 7). The *Auct. Oper. Imperf.* is almost the only ancient author who interprets the parable rightly; noting at length the inconveniences that attend the application of it to Jew and Gentile. But the 'as it seems to me,' with which Origen introduces his erroneous explanation, marks that there was another interpretation current in the Church, as is explicitly stated by Jerome: 'Others do not think that this is a parable of the Gentiles and Jews, but simply of the sinners and the just.'

xxii. 21, 22; Rom. x. 19–21). The application of the parable to Gentile and Jew need not indeed be excluded, since the whole Jewish nation stood morally to the Gentile world in the same relation which the more self-righteous among themselves did to notorious transgressors. But not till the next parable do Jew and Gentile, in their relations to one another, and in their several relations to the kingdom of God, come distinctly and primarily forward.

PARABLE XI.

THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN.

MATT. xxi. 33–45; MARK xii. 1–12; LUKE xx. 9–19.

THE Lord's adversaries had by this time so manifestly gotten the worse, that, for this day at least, they would willingly have brought the controversy by them so imprudently provoked (see ver. 23) to a close. But no; He will not let them go: He has begun and will finish; '*Hear another parable;*' as though He would say, 'I have still another word for you of warning and rebuke,' and to that He now summons them to listen. Uttered in the presence at once of the Pharisees and of the multitude, to St. Matthew it seemed rather addressed to the Pharisees, while St. Luke records it as spoken to the people (xx. 9); but there is no real difference here. The opening words, '*There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard,*' and still more those which immediately follow, suggest, and were intended to suggest, a reference to Isai. v. 1–7. He who came not to destroy, but to fulfil, takes up the prophet's words, connects his own appearing with all which had gone before in the history of the nation, presents it as the crown and consummation of all God's dealings through a thousand years with his people. Nor is it to that passage in Isaiah alone that the Lord links on his teaching here. The image of the kingdom of God as a vine-stock,[1] or as a vineyard,[2] runs through the whole Old

[1] The vine-stock often appears on the Maccabæan coins as the emblem of Palestine: sometimes too the bunch of grapes and the vine-leaf. Deyling (*Obss. Sac.* vol. iii. p. 236): 'The grape-bunch also, the vine-leaf and the palm, as is shown by the mummies, were symbols of Judæa.'

[2] St. Bernard compares the Church with a vineyard at some length

Testament (Deut. xxxii. 32; Ps. lxxx. 8–16; Isai. xxvii. 1–7; Jer. ii. 21; Ezek. xv. 1–6; xix. 10; Hos. x. 1); and has many fitnesses to recommend it. The vine, the lowest, is at the same time the noblest of plants. Our Lord appropriates it, among earthly symbols, to Himself; He is the mystical Vine (John xv. 1); had been in prophecy compared to it long before [1] (Gen. xlix. 11). It is a tree which spreads and diffuses itself, casts out its tendrils and branches on every side;[2] so that of that Vine which the Lord brought out of Egypt the Psalmist could say, 'it *filled* the land' (lxxx. 9). Nor may we, while drawing out these points of similitude, omit the fact that there was no property so valuable, nor which yielded returns so large, as a vineyard (Cant. viii. 11, 12); yet only yielding these in answer to the most unceasing diligence and toil.[3]

(*In Cant. Serm.* 30): 'Planted in faith, it sends forth its roots in charity, is dug about with the hoe of discipline, manured with the tears of penitents, watered with the words of preachers, and thus truly overflows with a wine in which is gladness but not luxury, a wine of entire sweetness and of no lust. This wine does indeed gladden the heart of man, and we may believe that even angels drink it with gladness.' Compare Augustine, *Serm.* lxxxvii. 1; and Ambrose, *Exp. in Luc.* ix. 29.

[1] Grotius: 'The vine boasts in the fable (Judges ix. 13) that God and men are cheered by its liquor, which is most truly said of the blood of Christ.'

[2] Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xiv. 3.

[3] Cato: 'No possession is more precious, none requires more toil.' Virgil presses the same in words well worthy to be kept in mind by all to whom a spiritual vineyard has been committed (*Georg.* ii. 397–419):

Est etiam ille labor curandis vitibus alter,
Cui nunquam exhausti satis est: namque omne quotannis
Terque quaterque solum scindendum, glebaque versis
Æternum frangenda bidentibus: omne levandum
Fronde nemus. Redit agricolis labor actus in orbem
Atque in se sua per vestigia volvitur annus.

('This further task again to dress the vine
Hath needs beyond exhausting; the whole soil
Thrice, four times yearly must be cleft, the sod
With hoes reversed be crushed continually,
The whole plantation lightened of its leaves.
Round on the labourer spins the wheel of toil
As on its own track rolls the circling year.'—James Rhoades.)

In Isaiah, the vineyard and the Jewish Church are one; 'The vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant.' It is therefore described, not as transferred to others, but as laid waste (v. 5, 6; Mic. i. 6). Here, where the vineyard is not laid waste, but handed over to more faithful husbandmen, and the judgment lights not on it, but on those who so guiltily sought to seize it for their own, we must regard it rather as the kingdom of God in its idea, which idea Jew and Gentile have been successively placed in the condition to realize;[1] a failure in this involving for both alike a forfeiture of the tenure. Inasmuch, indeed, as Israel according to the flesh was the first called to realize the heavenly kingdom, it may be said that for a time the vineyard *was* the Jewish Church; but this arrangement was accidental and temporary, not necessary and permanent, as the sequel abundantly proved. It was the fatal mistake of the Jews, witnessed against in vain by the prophets of old (Jer. vii. 4), by the Baptist (Matt. iii. 9), and now and often by the Lord Jesus Himself (Matt. viii. 12; Luke xiii. 29), that they and the kingdom were so identified, that it could never be separated from them.

The householder is more than possessor of this vineyard: he has himself '*planted*' it (Exod. xv. 17; Ps. xliv. 2). This planting dates back to the times of Moses and Joshua, to the founding of a divine polity in the land of Canaan; and is described, Deut. xxxii. 12–14; cf. Ezek. xvi. 9–14; Neh. ix. 23–25. But this was not all. Having planted, he also '*hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press*[2] *in it, and*

[1] See Origen, *Comm. in Matt.* in loc.

[2] Ληνός = torcular; in St. Mark ὑπολήνιον = lacus; which last can alone be properly said to have been dug; being afterwards lined with masonry, as Chardin mentions that he found them in Persia. Sometimes they were hewn out of the solid rock; Nonnus (*Dionys.* xii. 330) describes in some spirited lines how Bacchus hollowed out such a receptable from thence. In the ληνός, or press, the grapes were placed and were there crushed, commonly by the feet of men (Judg. ix. 27; Neh. xiii. 15; Isai. lxiii. 3); while at the bottom of this press was a closely-grated hole, through which the juice being expressed, ran into

built a tower.' This hedge might be either a stone wall[1] (Prov. xxiv. 31; Num. xxii. 24; Isai. v. 5; Mic. i. 6), or a fence of thorns or other quickset; this last, if formed, as is common in the East, of the prickly wild aloe, or of some other briars with which Judæa abounds, would more effectually exclude the enemies of the vineyard, the fox (Cant. ii. 15; Neh. iv. 3), and the wild boar (Ps. lxxx. 13), than any wall of stone.[2] The vineyard of Isaiah v. 5 is furnished with both. That it should possess a '*wine-press*' would be a matter of course. Not less needful would be the '*tower*;'[3] by which we understand not so much the kiosk, or ornamental building,

the ὑπολήνιον (or προλήνιον, Isai. v. 3, LXX), the vat prepared beneath for its reception, the lacus vinarius of Columella. See the *Dictionary of the Bible*, s. v. Wine-press; Robinson, *Later Biblical Researches*, p. 137; and Tristram, *Natural History of the Bible*, p. 409. 'The ancient wine-presses,' the last observes, 'are among the most interesting remains of the Holy Land, perhaps the only relics still existing of the actual handiwork of Israel, prior to the first Captivity. The hills of southern Judæa abound with them.'

[1] See Greswell, *Exposition of the Parables*, vol. v. p. 4.

[2] Homer, *Il.* xviii. 564: so too Virgil (*Georg.* ii. 371): 'Hedges also must be woven;' Tristram, *Natural History of the Bible*, p. 430.

[3] Πύργος = ὀπωροφυλάκιον, Isai. i. 8; xxiv. 20; 'the watch-towers, which the guardians of the crops used to occupy' (Jerome); 'a booth that the keeper maketh' (Job xxvii. 18, Cant. i. 6). Such temporary towers I have seen often in Spain, at the season when the ripening grapes might tempt the passers-by: the more necessary, as the vineyard commonly lies open to the road without any protection whatever. A scaffolding is raised high with planks and poles, and with matting above to protect from the sun; and on this, commanding an extensive view all around, a watcher, with a long gun, is planted. The elder Niebur (*Beschreib. v. Arab.* p. 138) says: 'In the mountainous district of Yemen I saw here and there as it were nests in the trees, in which the Arabs perched themselves to watch their cornfields. In Tehama, where the trees were scarcer, they built for this purpose a high and light scaffold.' Ward (*View of the Hindoos*, vol. ii. p. 327) observes: 'The wild hogs and buffaloes [silvestres uri, *Georg.* ii. 374] make sad havoc in the fields and orchards of the Hindoos; to keep them out, men are placed on elevated covered stages in the fields;'—sometimes on mounds built with sods of earth; and the watchers are frequently armed with slings, which they use with great dexterity and effect, to drive away invaders of every description.

serving mainly for delight, as a place of shelter for the watchmen who should guard the fruits of the vineyard, and a receptacle for the fruits themselves.

The question, which to an interpreter of the parables must so often recur, presents itself here. Shall we attach any special signification to these several details? do they thus belong to the very substance of the parable, or are they drapery only, and, if expressing anything, yet only in a general way the care of the heavenly householder for his Church, that provision of all things necessary for life and godliness which He made for his people? Many in this as in other like cases will allow nothing more than this last. But, whatever may be said of the wine-press and the tower,[1] it is difficult, with Ephes. ii. 14 before us, where the law is described as 'the middle wall of partition'[2] between the Jew and Gentile, to refuse to the hedging round of the vineyard a spiritual significance. By their circumscription through the law, the Jews became a people dwelling alone, and not reckoned among the nations (Num. xxiii. 9); that law being at once a hedge of separation and of defence,[3] 'a wall of fire' (Zech. ii. 5; cf. Ps. cxxv. 2; Isai. xxvii. 3), which, preserving them distinct from the idolatrous nations round them and from their abominations, was for them the pledge and assurance of the continued protection of God. Add to this that not inwardly only, but outwardly as well, Judæa, through its geographical position, was hedged round; by the bounty of nature on every side circumscribed and defended; being

[1] Delitzsch, in the parallel passage of Isaiah, does not hesitate to interpret these: 'The tower for protection and ornament in the midst of the vineyard is Jerusalem as the royal city, with Sion as the royal citadel (Mic. iv. 8): the winepress is the temple, where, according to Ps. xxxvi. 8, the heavenly wine of joy flows in streams, and where, according to Ps. xlii., all the thirst of the soul is directed.'

[2] Μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ there, as φραγμός here.

[3] Ambrose (*Exp. in Luc.* ix. 24) explains it: 'He walled it about with the protection of the divine guardianship, lest it should lie too easy a prey to the attacks of the spiritual wild beasts;' and *Hexaëm.* iii. 12: 'He surrounded it as with a kind of wall of celestial precepts, and with the guardianship of angels.'

guarded on the east by the river Jordan and the two lakes, on the south by the desert and mountainous country of Idumæa, on the west by the sea, and by Anti-Libanus on the north: for so, observes Vitringa, had God in his counsels determined, who willed that Israel should dwell alone. It is not so easy to point out distinct spiritual benefits shadowed forth by the wine-press[1] and the tower.[2] Many attempts to discover such have been made; but they all have something fanciful and arbitrary about them; and, though often ingenious, yet fail to command an unreserved assent.

The householder, who might now say, 'What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done?' '*let it out to husbandmen*' (Cant. viii. 11); '*and went into a far country;*' and as St. Luke adds, '*for a long while.*' What the terms of his agreement with the husbandmen were, we are not expressly told, but, as the sequel clearly implies, having made a covenant with them to receive a fixed proportion of the fruits in their season. Since, as is evident, the '*husbandmen*' must be distinguished from the vineyard they were set to cultivate and keep, we must understand by them the spiritual chiefs of the nation, to whom God, in the very constitution of the Jewish polity, had given authority to sit in Moses' chair, and from it to teach the people (Mal. ii. 7; Ezek. xxxiv. 2; Matt. xxiii. 2, 3). By the vineyard itself will then naturally be signified the great body of the nation, who, instructed and taught by these, should have brought forth

[1] Generally the wine-press is taken to signify the prophetic institution. Thus Irenæus (*Con. Hær.* iv. 36): 'In digging a wine-press he prepared a lodging-place for the spirit of prophecy.' Hilary: 'Upon whom [the prophets] an abundance of the fire of the Holy Spirit was to flow after the manner of new wine.' So Ambrose, *Exp. in Luc.* ix. 24.

[2] In Isaiah two other principal benefits are recorded,—that the vineyard was on a fruitful hill (apertos Bacchus amat colles, Virgil), sloping towards the rays of the sun, and that the stones were gathered out from it (2 Kin. iii. 19), the last an allusion to the casting out of the Canaanites, who else might have proved stumbling-blocks for God's people (Ps. cxxv. 3). With the whole parable Ezek. xvi. will form an instructive parallel.

fruits of righteousness unto God.[1] In the miracles which went along with the deliverance from Egypt, the giving of the law from Sinai, and the planting in Canaan, God openly dealt with his people, made, as we know, an express covenant with them; but this done, withdrew for a while, not speaking any more to them face to face (Deut. xxxiv. 10–12), but waiting in patience to see what the law would effect, and what manner of works they, under the teaching of their appointed guides, would bring forth.[2]

'*And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it,*' his share of the produce, whatever that might be (Cant. viii. 12). There was, of course, no time when God did not demand obedience, gratitude, love from his people; all times therefore are in one sense '*times of the fruit*' (Isai. v. 7). But the conditions of the parable demand this language; and moreover, in the history of souls and of nations, there are seasons which even more than all other are '*times of fruit;*' when God requires such with more than usual earnestness, when it will fare most ill with a soul or nation, if these be not found. But the '*servants*' who should receive this fruit, how, it may be asked, should these be distinguished from the '*husbandmen*'? Exactly in this, that the '*servants*,' that is,

[1] Frederick Maurice, looking over these pages before their publication, appended here this note, which every reader will be glad I have preserved: 'I do not absolutely question the truth of this interpretation, but it seems to me rather an escape from a difficulty which does not exist more in the parable than in all our customary language about the Church. The Church is both *teacher* and *taught*; but the teachers are not merely the ministers; the whole Church of one generation teaches the whole Church of another, by its history, acts, words, mistakes, &c. The Church existing out of time an unchangeable body teaches the members of the Church existing in every particular time.'

[2] Ambrose (*Exp. in Luc.* ix. 23): 'At many seasons He withdrew from them, lest his demand should seem over-hasty; for the indulgence of liberality makes stubbornness all the more inexcusable.' Theophylact: 'The sojourning of God afar off is his patience.' Bengel: 'A season of divine silence is indicated, when men act as they please.' See Ezek. viii. 12; Ps. x. 5.

the prophets and other more eminent ministers and messengers of God, *were sent;* being raised up at critical epochs, each with his own direct mission and message; the '*husbandmen*,' on the other hand, are the more permanent ecclesiastical authorities, whose authority lay in the very constitution of the theocracy itself.[1] On this receiving of the fruits Olshausen[2] says well, 'These fruits which are demanded, are in nowise to be explained as particular works, nor yet as a condition of honesty and uprightness, but much rather as the repentance and the inward longing after true inward righteousness, which the law was unable to bring about. It is by no means implied that the law had not an influence in producing uprightness; it cuts off the grosser manifestations of sin, and reveals its hidden abomination; so that a righteousness according to the law can even under the law come forth as fruit; while yet, to be sufficing, this must have a sense of the need of a redemption for its basis (Rom. iii. 20). The servants therefore here appear as those who seek for these spiritual needs, that they may link to them the promises concerning a coming Redeemer: but the unfaithful husbandmen who had abused their own

[1] Bengel: 'The servants are the extraordinary and more eminent ministers; the husbandmen the ordinary ones.'

[2] Ἀπὸ τοῦ καρποῦ—according to the well-known *métayer* system still largely practised in parts of France and in Italy: see Fawcett's *Political Economy*, 4th ed. p. 202. Pliny (*Ep.* ix. 37) writes that the only way in which he could obtain any returns from some estates of his, hitherto badly managed, was by letting them on this system: 'The one means of improvement is for me to let them, not for a money rent, but for a share in the produce.' He was to appoint some guardians (exactores and custodes), differing only from these servants, that they were to be constantly on the spot to see that he obtained his just share of the produce. Chardin (*Voy. en Perse*, vol. v. p. 384, Langlès' ed.) has much on the *métayer* system as he found it in Persia, and illustrates our parable well, showing what a constant source it proved of violence and fraud: 'This agreement, which appears, and which ought to be, an honest bargain, nevertheless proves an inexhaustible source of fraud, controversy, and violence, in which justice is hardly ever observed, and, what is very remarkable, it is the lord who always has the worse, and is the sufferer;' all which is exactly what here we find. See Du Cange, s. vv. Medietarius and Medietas.

position, denied and slew these messengers of grace.' This '*time of the fruit*' would not, according to the Levitical law, have arrived till the fifth year after the planting of the vineyard. For three years the fruit was to be uncircumcised, and therefore ungathered; in the fourth, it was 'holy to praise the Lord withal;' and only in the fifth could those who tended the vineyard either themselves enjoy the fruit or render of the same to others (Lev. xix. 23–25). During this long period the husbandmen may have managed to forget that they were tenants at all, and not possessors in fee; and this may help to explain what follows.

'*And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first, and they did unto them likewise.*' The two later Evangelists record the wickedness of these wicked husbandmen more in detail than the first, St. Luke tracing very distinctly their advance under the sense of impunity from bad to worse. When the first servant came, they '*beat him, and sent him away empty.*' The next they '*entreated shamefully;*' or according to St. Mark, who defines the very nature of the outrage, '*at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head,*[1] *and sent him away shamefully handled.*'[2] One might almost gather from these last words that in their wanton insolence they devised devices of scorn

[1] Ἐκεφαλαίωσαν (Mark xii. 4). Our Translators have here returned to Wiclif's rendering; that of the intermediate Protestant Versions, '*brake his head*,' probably seeming to them too familiar. It is a singular use of a verb, nowhere else used but as to gather up in one sum, as under one head; of which correcter use we have a good example in the *Epistle* of Barnabas, where of the Son of God it is said that he came in the flesh, ἵνα τὸ τέλειον τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν κεφαλαιώσῃ τοῖς διώξασιν ἐν θανάτῳ τοὺς προφήτας αὐτοῦ (c. v.). Wakefield's suggestion (*Silv. Crit.* ii. p. 76), that ἐκεφαλαίωσαν here is, breviter vel summatim egerunt, they made short work of it, or as Lightfoot expresses it, referring to the fact that the servant came to demand payment,—they squared accounts with him (ironically), is quite untenable. The accusative αὐτόν is decisive against it, as against Theophylact's anticipation of this explanation: συνετέλεσαν καὶ ἐκορύφωσαν τὴν ὕβριν.

[2] Ἀπέστειλαν ἠτιμωμένον, or, as in the best texts, ἠτίμησαν.

and wrong, not expressly named, against this servant; such, perhaps, as Hanun did, when he 'took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, and sent them away' (2 Sam. x. 4). The third they wounded, and cast out of the vineyard with violence; flung him forth, it might be, with hardly any life in him. In the two earlier Evangelists the outrage reaches even to the killing of some of the subordinate messengers; while in St. Luke this extremity of outrage is reserved for the son. The latter thus presents the series of crimes on an ever-ascending scale; but the former are truer to historical fact, seeing that not a few of the prophets were not merely maltreated, but actually put to death. Thus, if we may trust Jewish tradition, Jeremiah was stoned by the exiles in Egypt, Isaiah sawn asunder by king Manasseh. For an abundant historical justification of this description, and as showing that the past ingratitude of the people is not painted here in colours darker than the facts would warrant, see Jer. xx. 1, 2; xxxvii. 15; xxxviii. 6; 1 Kin. xviii. 13; xix. 14; xxii. 24–27; 2 Kin. vi. 31; xxi. 16; 2 Chron. xxiv. 19–22; xxxvi. 15, 16: and also Acts vii. 52; 1 Thess. ii. 15; the whole passage finding its best commentary in the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews: 'And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; . . . of whom the world was not worthy' (xi. 37, 38).

The patience of the householder under these extraordinary provocations is wonderful, sending as he does messenger after messenger to win back these wicked men to a sense of their duty, instead of resuming at once possession of his vineyard, and inflicting summary vengeance upon them. It needs to be thus magnified, seeing that it represents to us the infinite patience and long-suffering of God: 'Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate' (Jer. xliv. 4). 'Nevertheless, they were disobedient,

and rebelled against Thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to Thee, and they wrought great provocations' (Neh. ix. 26). The whole confession of the Levites as here recorded is in itself an admirable commentary on this parable.

'*But last of all he sent unto them his son*,' or in the still more affecting words of St. Mark, '*Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son*' (cf. Heb. i. 1, 2). When the householder expresses his conviction, that however those wicked men may have outraged and defied his inferior messengers, they will reverence his son, we need not embarrass ourselves, as some have done, with the fact that He whom the householder represents must have fully known from the beginning what treatment *his* Son would meet from those to whom He sent Him. Not that there is not a difficulty, but it is the same which meets us everywhere, that of the reconciliation of man's freedom with God's foreknowledge.[1] That they are reconcilable we know, and that we cannot reconcile them we know; and this is all which can be said upon the matter. The description of this the last of the ambassadors as the son of the householder, as his only one, '*his well-beloved*,' all marks as strongly as possible the difference of rank between Christ and the prophets, the superior dignity of *his* person, who only was a Son in the highest sense of the word[2] (Heb. iii. 5, 6); and some, doubtless, of those who heard, quite understood what He meant, and the honour

[1] Jerome: 'This which he says, "They will reverence my son," is not spoken out of ignorance; for of what can the householder be ignorant, seeing that in this place he must be understood to stand for God? But God is always spoken of as dubitating, in order that the freedom of man's will may be preserved.' Cf. Ambrose, *De Fide*, v. 17, 18.

[2] This is often urged by early Church writers, when proving the divinity of the Son; as by Ambrose (*De Fide*, v. 7): 'Observe that he named the servants first, the son afterwards; that thou mayst know that God the only-begotten Son, in respect of the power of his divinity, has neither a name nor any fellowship in common with the servants.' Cf. Irenæus, *Con. Hær.* iv. 36, 1.

which He thus claimed as peculiarly his own, however unable to turn his words against Himself, and to accuse Him of making Himself, as indeed He did, the Son of God (John v. 18). In this sending of his own Son by the heavenly Father, is the last and crowning effort of divine mercy. If it fail, on the one side all the resources even of heavenly love will have been exhausted; while on the other, those whose sin has caused it to fail will have filled up the measure of their guilt.

'*But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.*' Compare John xi. 47–53, and the evil counsels of Joseph's brethren against him: 'When they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him, and they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now, therefore, and let us slay him, . . . and we shall see what will become of his dreams' (Gen. xxxvii. 19, 20). As they, thinking to disappoint the purpose of God concerning their younger brother, help to bring it to pass, so the Jewish rulers were the instruments to fulfil that same purpose concerning Christ, which they meant for ever to defeat[1] (Acts iii. 18; iv. 27, 28).—'*This is the heir;*' the word is not used here in its laxer sense as a synonym for lord, like *heres* for *dominus*; but more accurately, he for whom the inheritance is meant, who is not in present possession, but to whom it will in due course rightfully arrive; not, as in earthly relations, by the death, but by the free appointment of the actual possessor. Christ is 'heir of all things' (Heb. i. 2), not as He is the Son of God, for the Church has always detected Arian tendencies lurking in that interpretation, but as He is the Son of man (Ephes. i. 20–23; Phil. ii. 9–11). So Theodoret: 'The Lord Christ is heir of all things, not as God, but as man; for as God He is maker of all.'

It is the heart which speaks in God's hearing (Ps. liii. 1);

[1] Augustine: 'They killed that they might possess; and, because they killed, they lost.'

the thought of men's heart is their true speech, and is therefore here regarded as the utterance of their lips. We cannot, indeed, imagine the Pharisees, even in their most secret counsels, ever trusting one another so far, or daring to look their own wickedness so directly in the face, as *to say*, in as many words, 'This is the Messiah, therefore let us slay Him.' But they desired that the inheritance might be theirs. What God had willed should only be transient and temporary, enduring till the times of reformation, they would fain have seen permanent;—and this, because they had prerogatives and privileges under that imperfect dispensation, which would cease when that which was perfect had come; or rather which, not ceasing, would yet be transformed into other and higher privileges, for which they had no care. The great Master-builder was about to take down the scaffolding provisionally reared, but which had now served its end; and this his purpose they, the under-builders, were setting themselves to oppose,[1] and were determined, at whatever cost, to resist to the uttermost. What God had founded, they would fain possess without God and against God; and imagined that they could do so; for indeed all self-righteousness what is it but an attempt to kill the heir, and to seize on the divine inheritance, a seeking to comprehend and take down into self that light, which is only light so long as it is recognized as something above self; whereof man is permitted to be a partaker; but which he neither himself originated, nor yet can ever possess in fee, or as his own, or otherwise than as continually receiving from on high; a light too, which, by the very success of the attempt to take it into his own possession, is as inevitably lost and extinguished as would be a ray of our natural light if we succeeded in cutting it off from its luminous source?

[1] Hilary: 'The design of the husbandmen and this expectation of the inheritance through the murder of the heir, is the empty hope that by the death of Christ the glory of the Law could be retained.' Grotius: 'By these words it is shown that the priests and chiefs of the Jewish people acted thus in the fervour of their desire to compel the Divine Law to serve their own ambition and profit.'

'*And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard and slew him.*' All three Evangelists describe the son as thus '*cast out of the vineyard*,' reminding us of Him who 'suffered without the gate' (Heb. xiii. 12, 13; John xix. 27); cut off in the intention of those who put Him to death from the people of God, and from all share in their blessings. Thus when Naboth perished on charges of blasphemy against God and the king, that is, for theocratic sins, 'they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones that he died'[1] (1 Kin. xxi. 13; cf. Acts vii. 58; xxi. 30). In St. Mark the husbandmen slay the son first, and only afterwards cast out the body (xii. 8; cf. Jer. xxii. 19). They deny it the common rites of sepulture, as Creon to Polynices; fling it forth, as much as to say, *that* is their answer to the householder's demands. The Lord so little doubts the extremities to which the hatred of his enemies will proceed, that in the parable He holds up to them the crime which they were meditating in their hearts, and in a few days should bring to the birth, as one already accomplished; not indeed thus binding them to this sin, but rather showing to them as in a mirror the hideousness of it, and, if this were possible, terrifying them from its actual consummation.[2]

If, however, this might not be, and if, like the husbandmen in the parable, they were resolved to consummate their crime, what should be their doom? This too they may see reflected in the mirror which Christ holds up before their

[1] Naboth dying for his vineyard has been often adduced as a prophetic type of the death of Christ and the purpose of that death. Thus Ambrose addresses the vineyard of the Lord, purchased with his own blood (*Exp. in Luc.* ix. 33): 'Hail, vineyard, worthy of so great a guardian: thou wast consecrated by the blood, not of a single Naboth, but of countless prophets, and (what is more) by the precious blood of the Lord. Naboth defended a temporal vineyard, but thou wast planted for us in perpetuity by the death of many martyrs, and by the cross of the Apostles rivalling the passion of their Lord wast extended to the limits of the whole world.'

[2] We have a remarkable example of a like prophesying to men their wickedness, as a last endeavour to turn them away from that wickedness, in Elisha's prophecy to Hazael (2 Kin. viii. 12–15).

eyes. '*When the Lord, therefore, of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?*' It is very instructive to note the way in which successive generations, which during so many centuries had been filling up the measure of the iniquity of Israel, are contemplated throughout but as one body of husbandmen; God's word being everywhere opposed to that shallow nominalism which would make 'nation' no more than a convenient form of language to express a certain aggregation of individuals. God will deal with nations as living organisms, and as having a moral unity of their own, and this continuing unbroken from age to age. Were it otherwise, all confession of our fathers' sins would be a mockery, and such words as our Lord's at Matt. xxiii. 32–35, without any meaning at all. Neither is there any injustice in this law of God's government, with which He encounters our selfish, self-isolating tendencies; for while there is thus a life of the whole, there is also a life for every part; and thus it is always possible for each individual even of that generation which, having filled up the last drop of the measure, is being chastised for all its own and its fathers' iniquities, by personal faith and repentance to withdraw himself from the general doom; not indeed always possible for him to escape his share in the outward calamity (though often there will be a Pella when Jerusalem is destroyed, an Ark when a world perishes), but always to escape from that which is the woe of the woe, from the wrath of God, of which the outward calamity is but the form and expression (Jer. xxxix. 11; Ezek. xi. 16).

The necessity of preserving the due probabilities of the narrative makes it impossible that the son himself should execute the final vengeance on these wicked husbandmen. He is slain, and cannot, like Him whom he shadows forth, rise again to exact the penalties of their guilt. This '*the lord of the vineyard*,' now for the first time so called, must do: neither is there anything here inconsistent with the general teaching of Scripture, for it is the Father, revealing Himself in the Son, who both gave the law at Sinai, and who also,

when the time of vengeance had arrived, visited and judged the apostate Church of Israel.

Perhaps the Pharisees, to whom Christ addressed the question, making the same appeal to them which Isaiah had made to their fathers (v. 3), and extorting their condemnation from their own lips,[1] had hitherto missed the scope of the parable, and before they were aware, pronounced sentence against themselves: '*He will miserably destroy those wicked men,*[2] *and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen,*

[1] Vitringa: 'The justice of God is so clear that if, putting aside all feeling, a man contemplates in another like to himself that which in the blindness of self-love he does not choose to see in himself, he is compelled by his conscience to recognise the justice of the divine cause. Nay, God condemns no man who is not condemned also by his own conscience. God has in every man his tribunal and his judgment seat, and judges man by means of man.'

[2] Κακοὺς κακῶς (= pessimos pessime), a proverbial expression, and, as Grotius observes, taken from the most classical Greek. This parallel, a parallel in much more than those two words, may suffice in place of many that might be adduced:

> Τοιγάρ σφ' Ὀλύμπου τοῦδ ὁ πρεσβεύων πατὴρ,
> Μνήμων τ' Ἐρινὺς, καὶ τελεσφόρος Δίκη
> Κ α κ ο ὺ ς κ α κ ῶ ς φθείρειαν, ὥσπερ ἤθελον
> Τὸν ἄνδρα λώβαις ἐκβαλεῖν ἀναξίως.
>
> Sophocles, *Ajax*, 1361–1364.

> Wherefore may he who rules in yon wide heaven,
> And the unforgetting fury-spirit, and she,
> Justice, who crowns the right, so ruin them
> With cruelest destruction, even as they
> Meant heartlessly to rob him of his tomb.
>
> Lewis Campbell.

Similar idioms are frequent in Greek. Thus λαμπρὸς λαμπρῶς, μεγάλοι μεγάλως, καθαρὰ καθαρῶς, σεμνὸς σεμνῶς, καλὸν καλῶς (Lobeck, *Paralipomena*, p. 58). The Authorized Version has not attempted to preserve the paronomasia: which, however, is not very difficult, and has been reproduced in the Revised Version, 'He will *miserably* destroy those *miserable* men.' The same difficulty, such as it is, attends the double φθείρειν at 1 Cor. iii. 17, for which the Authorized Version has equally failed to give an equivalent. How remarkable, as read in the light of these words, is the conviction expressed by Josephus (*B. J.* iv. 5, 2),

which shall render him the fruits in their seasons ; ' or it may be that, perceiving well enough, they had yet hitherto pretended not to perceive his drift, and so drew from Him words more explicit still ; such as it was idle any longer to affect to misunderstand : ' *Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.*' For then at length Christ and his adversaries stood face to face, as did once before a prophet and a wicked king of Israel, when the prophet, having obtained in his disguise a sentence from the lips of the king against himself, removed the ashes from his face, and the king ' discerned him that he was of the prophets,' and understood that he had unconsciously pronounced his own doom (1 Kin. xx. 41).[1]—The ' *God forbid,*' which the ' *people* ' uttered (Luke xx. 16), —the Pharisees had too much wariness and self-command to allow any such exclamation to escape from their lips—shows plainly that the aim of the parable had not escaped *them,* that they saw the drift of it betimes. The exclamation itself was either an expression of fear, desiring that such evil might be averted ; or else of unbelief, ' That shall never be ; we are God's people, and shall remain such to the end : ' and this more probably than that, from the spirit and temper of those who utter it (Ezek. xxxiii. 24 ; Matt. iii. 9 ; Rom. ii. 17).

But this truth, so strange and unwelcome to his hearers, rests not on his word alone. The same was long ago foreannounced in those Scriptures to which his adversaries professed to appeal, and from which they condemned Him : ' *Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner ?* ' The quotation is from Ps. cxviii. 22, 23, a psalm which the Jews acknowledged as applying to the King Messiah (Matt. xix. 38), and of which there is a like application at Acts iv.

that one man's murder was the cause of the destruction of Jerusalem. This was most true, although Ananus the high-priest was not the man.

[1] Compare the rules which Cicero (*De Invent.* i. 32) gives for this bringing of an adversary unconsciously to convict himself.

11 ; 1 Pet. ii. 7 ; with an allusion somewhat more remote, at Ephes. ii. 20.[1] The passage quoted forms an exact parallel with this parable ; all which the Lord threatens here, being implicitly threatened there. '*The builders*' there correspond to '*the husbandmen*' here ; as those were appointed of God to carry up the spiritual temple, so these to cultivate the spiritual vineyard ; the rejection of the chief corner-stone corresponds to the denying and murdering of the heir. There is another motive for abandoning the image of the vineyard ; I mean its inadequacy to set forth one important moment of the truth, which yet must by no means be passed over ; namely this, that the malice of men should not defeat the purpose of God, that the Son should yet be the heir ; and that not merely vengeance should be taken, but that He should take it. Now all this is distinctly involved in the Lord's concluding words : '*Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.*' The rejected stone, having become the head of the corner, is itself the instrument of their punishment who have set it at nought.[2] *They* fall on the stone who are offended at Christ in his low estate (Isai. viii. 14 ; liii. 2 ; Luke ii. 34 ; iv. 22–29 ; John iv. 44) ; of this sin his hearers were already guilty. There was a worse sin which they were on the point of committing, which He warns them would be followed by a more tremendous punishment ; they on whom the stone falls are those who set

[1] The 'chief corner stone' there = 'the corner stone,' Job. xxxviii. 6 ; 'the stone became the head of the corner' here : 'the head stone,' Zech. iv. 7 (see 1 Kin. v. 17). Christ is this corner-stone, as uniting Jew and Gentile, making both one ; thus Augustine (*Serm.* lxxxviii. 11) : 'An angle joins together two walls coming from opposite sides. What is so opposite as the circumcision and the uncircumcision, which have the one wall on the side of the Jews, the other on the side of the Gentiles ? But by the corner-stone they are joined together.'

[2] Cajetan : 'He adds something more than would have been revealed by the parable : for the parable brought us as far as the punishment : but by this addition it is further stated that the murder of the son did not deprive the son of the inheritance : for it is this that is signified by the addition of the prophecy concerning the Messiah under the metaphor of the stone.'

themselves in self-conscious opposition against the Lord; who, knowing who He is, do yet to the end oppose themselves to Him and to his kingdom;[1] and these shall not merely fall and be broken; for one might recover himself, though with some present harm, from such a fall as this; but on them the stone shall fall as from heaven, and shall grind[2] them to powder,—in the words of Daniel (ii. 35), 'like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors,'—crushing and destroying them for ever.[3]

All three Evangelists note the exasperation of the Chief Priests and Pharisees, when they perceived, as all did at last, though some sooner than others, that the parable was spoken against *them* (cf. Jer. xviii. 18). They no longer kept any terms with the Lord, and, only that '*they feared the multitude*,' would have laid violent hands on Him at once. Yet not even so does He give them up; but having, in this parable, set forth their relation to God as a relation of *duty*, shown them that a *charge* was laid upon them, with the

[1] So Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* iii. 7); and Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* cix. 5): 'Christ the true stone lies in this world as if fastened to the earth, but in the judgment to be He shall come as from on high, and shall grind the wicked to powder: of that stone it was said, "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder:" to be broken is different from to be ground to powder: to be broken is the less of the two.'

[2] Λικμήσει, from λικμός (= πτύον, Matt. iii. 12), the fan with which the chaff, which in the act of threshing had been broken into minute fragments, is scattered and driven away upon the wind (Isai. xvii. 13; xli. 2, 15, 16; Ps. i. 4). In the New Testament it occurs only here; in the parallel passage, Dan. ii. 44, λικμήσει πάσας τὰς βασιλείας.

[3] H. de Sto. Victore (*Annot. in Luc.*): 'According to the moral meaning a vineyard is let out, when the mystery of baptism is entrusted to the faithful for them to labour in. Three servants are sent to receive of the fruits, when the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets respectively exhort to a good life: they are received with insults or beaten and cast out, when men scorn or blaspheme the word they hear. The heir, who is sent last of all, is killed by him who scorns the Son of God, and casts insult upon the Spirit, by whom he was sanctified. The vineyard is given to another, when the humble is enriched by the grace which the proud casts from him.'

guilt they incurred in neglecting to fulfil it, so in that which follows, He sets forth to them the same in a yet more inviting light, as a relation of *privilege*. He presents to them their work not any more as a burden laid upon them, but as a grace imparted to them;—which, therefore, they incurred an equal guilt, or indeed a greater, in counting light of or despising. If this is a more legal, that is a more evangelical, parable.

PARABLE XII.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON.

MATTHEW xxii. 1–14.

THIS is sometimes called the parable of the Wedding Garment. The name is a faulty one, being drawn from that which after all is but an episode in it; and the title given above, the same which it bears in our Bible, quite as effectually distinguishes it from the Great Supper of St. Luke (xiv. 16). Such distinction indeed it is needful to maintain, for the two must not be confounded,[1] as merely different recensions of the same discourse. Both indeed rest on the image of a festival to which many are bidden, some refusing the invitation and some accepting; but this is not sufficient to identify them with one another; and indeed there is much, and in many ways, to keep them apart. They were spoken on different occasions—that at a meal, this in the temple. They belong to very different epochs of our Lord's ministry, that to a much earlier period than this. When that was spoken the Pharisees had not openly broken with the Lord; it was indeed in the house of a Pharisee, whither He had gone to eat bread, that the parable was uttered (Luke xiv. 1). But when this was spoken, their enmity had reached the highest pitch; they had formally resolved by any means to remove him out of the way (John xi. 47–53). Then there was hope that the chiefs of the nation might yet be

[1] See Augustine, *De Cons. Evang.* ii. 71; Gregory the Great, *Hom.* 38 *in Evang.* Strangely enough, Theophylact, Calvin, and Maldonatus, maintain their identity; the last saying, 'The differences which appear are so slight that they ought not to withdraw us from this opinion.'

won over to the obedience of the truth; now they are fixed in their rejection of the counsel of God, and in their hatred of his Christ. In agreement with all this, the parable as last spoken, or as we have it here, is far severer than when first uttered, than St. Luke has recorded it. In that the guests, while they decline the invitation, are yet at pains to make civil excuses for so doing; in this they put it from them with a defiant and absolute No—so hating the message that some among them maltreat and kill the bearers of it; even as we cannot doubt that, had it consisted with decorum, and if the parable would have borne it, the king's son himself, as the last ambassador of his grace, would have been the victim of their outrage, as is the householder's son in the parable that just goes before. It is there a private man whose bidding is contemptuously set aside, it is here a king. It is there an ordinary entertainment, here the celebration of the marriage of his son. In the higher dignity of the person inviting, in the greater solemnity of the occasion, there are manifest aggravations of the guilt of the despisers. And as the offence is thus heavier, as those were but discourteous guests, while these are rebels, so is the doom more dreadful. In St. Luke's parable they are merely shut out from the festival; in this, their city is burned, and they themselves destroyed; the utmost which in fact is threatened there being that God, turning from one portion of the Jewish people,—from the priests and the Pharisees,—would offer the privileges which they despised to another portion of the same nation, the people that knew not the law, the publicans and harlots, with only slightest intimation (ver. 23) of a call of the Gentiles; while here the forfeiture of the kingdom by the whole Jewish people, who with fewest exceptions had shown themselves unworthy of it, is announced.[1]

[1] Fleck (*De Reg. Div.* p. 241) with truth observes: 'Of the parables put forth in the latter parts of the book of Matthew the character is such that they breathe the sacred sadness of the divine spirit and reveal a severe mood. They come into the period in which the Saviour after full experience of the wiles, the malignant plots, and the blindness of the Pharisees, priests, and elders of the people, foresaw that these would

A late objecter,[1] taking no account of these altered conditions, which justify and explain the different forms in which the parable appears, asserts that St. Luke is here the only accurate reporter of Christ's words, St. Matthew mixing up with them some foreign elements,—reminiscences, for instance, of the maltreatment and murder of the servants, drawn from the parable preceding; and also blending into the same whole fragments of another parable, that, namely, of the Wedding Garment, which, when uttered, was totally distinct. For the first assertion his only plausible argument is, that while it is quite intelligible that husbandmen should maltreat servants of their lord, who came demanding rent from them; it is inconceivable, and therefore could find no place in a parable, of which perfect verisimilitude is the first condition, that invited guests, however unwilling to keep their engagement, should abuse and even kill the servants sent to remind them that the festival, to which they were already engaged, was actually ready. This, it is true, *can* with difficulty be conceived, so long as we suppose no other motive but unwillingness to keep their engagement at work in them. But may not a deep alienation from their lord, with a readiness to resist and rebel against him, existing long before, have found their utterance here? The presence of these his ambassadors, an outrage against whom would constitute an outrage against himself, may have afforded the desired opportunity for displaying a hostility which, though latent, had long been entertained.[2] If there be something monstrous in their

be daily more hostile to the divine cause.' And Unger (*De Parab. Jes. Nat.* p. 122): 'Thus Matthew seems to have recorded the parable as Jesus himself repeated it on that later and sterner occasion, with variations and additions, made more severe, and now sorrowfully prophesying concerning the whole Jewish people.'

[1] Strauss, *Leben Jesu*, vol. i. p. 677 seq So too Keim, *Leben Jesu*, vol. iii. p. 129.

[2] Oftentimes in the East a feast would have a great political significance—would, in fact, be a great gathering of the vassals of the king; contemplated on this side, their refusal to come assumes the aspect of rebellion. Thus some have supposed the feast recorded in Esther i. is identical with the great gathering which Xerxes (Ahasuerus) made when

conduct, it is only the fitter to declare the monstrous fact, that men should maltreat, and slay, the messengers of God's grace, the ambassadors of Christ, who come to them with glad tidings of good things,—should be ready at once to rend *them*, and to trample their pearls under foot.

His other assertion, that the episode of the wedding garment cannot have originally pertained to the parable, rests partly on the whole objection, that the guest could not with any justice be punished for wanting that which, as the course of the story goes, he had no opportunity of obtaining,—on which something will presently be said,—and partly upon this, that an entirely new and alien element is here introduced into the parable; marring its unity; awkwardly appended to, not intimately cohering with, it. But it is not so. Most needful was it that a parable, inviting sinners of every degree to a fellowship in the blessings of the Gospel, should also remind them that, for the lasting enjoyment of these, they must put off their former conversation; that if, as regarded the past, they were freely called, still for the present and time to come they were called unto holiness,—in Theophylact's words, 'that the entrance, indeed, to the marriage-feast is without scrutiny, for by grace alone we are called, as well bad as good; but the life of those that have entered, hereafter shall not be without scrutiny; that the King will make a very strict examination of those who, having entered into the faith, shall be found in filthy garments.'

Thus much on the relation in which this parable stands to the similar one in St. Luke. When we compare it with that which it immediately follows, we see a marked advance. The Lord revealing Himself in ever clearer light as the central figure of the kingdom, gives here a far plainer intimation than there of the dignity of his person, the nobility of his descent. There He was indeed the son, the only and beloved one, of the householder; but here his race is royal, and He

he was planning his Greek expedition (σύλλογον ἐπίκλητον Περσέων τῶν ἀρίστων); though Herodotus (vii. 8) brings out more its political, the sacred historian its festal, side.

appears as Himself at once the King, and the King's Son (Ps. lxxii. 1). It is thus declared that the sphere in which this parable moves is that of the kingdom; which, announced and prepared before, was only actually present with the advent of the King. In that other, a parable of the Old Testament history, the Son Himself appears rather as the last and greatest in the line of its prophets and teachers, crowning and completing the old, than as inaugurating the new. In that, a parable of the law, God appears *demanding* something *from* men; in this, a parable of grace, He appears more as *giving* something *to* them. There, He is displeased that his demands are not complied with; here, that his goodness is not accepted. There He requires; here He imparts. And thus, as we so often find, the two mutually complete one another; this taking up the matter where the other left it.

'*And Jesus answered, and spake unto them again by parables.*' That He spoke is plain, but that he '*answered*' seems to require some explanation, seeing that no question had been addressed to Him. It is sufficient to observe that he '*answers*,' on whom an occasion, or it may be a necessity, of speaking has been imposed.[1] So is it here. This new parable is the Lord's answer to the endeavour of the Chief Priests and Pharisees to lay hands upon Him. '*The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage*[2] *for his son.*' The two favourite images under which the

[1] Bengel: 'The word "answers" may be used not only of him who has been asked a question, but of him to whom a cause for speaking has been given.'

[2] Ποιεῖν γάμον (Gen. xxix. 22; Tob. viii. 19; 1 Macc. ix. 37; x. 58) is rather, as often in classical Greek, to celebrate the marriage *feast* than the marriage (Matt. xxv. 10; Esth. ii. 18); and sometimes the notion of a marriage falls altogether into the background, and that of a festival alone remains; thus Esth. ix. 22; and probably at Luke xiv. 8. Exactly the reverse has befallen the German hochzeit, which, signifying at first any *high* festival, is now restricted to the festival *of a marriage*. These marriage festivities lasted commonly seven, or fourteen, days (Gen. xxix. 27; Judg. xiv. 12; Tob. viii. 9); and this not by accident, but because of the significance of this, the Covenant number.

prophets of the Old Covenant set forth the blessings of the New, and of all near communion with God, that of a festival (Isai. xxv. 6; lxv. 13; Cant. v. 1), and of a marriage (Isai. lxi. 10; lxii. 5; Hos. ii. 19; Matt. ix. 15; John iii. 29; Ephes. v. 32; 2 Cor. xi. 9), meet and interpenetrate one another in the marriage festival[1] here. There results indeed this inconvenience, a consequence of the inadequacy of things earthly to set forth things heavenly, that the members of the Church are at once the guests invited to the feast, and, in their collective capacity, constitute the bride at whose espousals the feast is given.[2] But as we advance in the parable the circumstances of the marriage altogether fall out of sight;[3] the bearing of the several invited guests is that to which our whole attention is directed. This, like the last, has its groundwork and rudiments in the Old Testament (Exod. xxiv. 11; Zeph. i. 7, 8; Prov. ix. 1–6); and it entered quite into the circle of Jewish expectations that the setting up of the kingdom of the Messiah should be ushered in by a glorious festival; our Lord Himself elsewhere making use of the same image for the setting forth of the same truths (Luke xxii. 18,

[1] Vitringa (*In Apocal.* xix. 7): 'These nuptials figure the intimate union of Christ with the Church, which is accompanied by the mutual plighting of faith, and sealed by a treaty of contract, for the begetting of that spiritual race which is to cover the world. The marriage feast shadows forth alike the benefits of grace which by the power of the righteousness of Christ are set forth for satisfying and making joyful the Church, the participation also of these benefits, and lastly the joy and festivity which are conjoined with the fruition of the blessings of grace, and flow forth from it on to the guests of this banquet.'

[2] Augustine (*In Ep.* 1 *Joh. Tract.* 2): 'Not as in earthly marriages where some come to the marriage, and another, namely, the bride, is married: in the Church those who come, if they come in the right spirit, become the bride.'

[3] Augustine and Gregory the Great (*Hom.* 38 *in Evang.*) escape this difficulty, regarding this marriage as one between the divine Word and the human Nature; not, at the same time, excluding the more obvious meaning suggested by such passages as Ephes. v. 24–32. Gregory the Great shows how well the two interpretations can be reconciled, saying: 'Here the Father made a marriage for his royal Son, by which through the mystery of the incarnation He joined to him the holy Church.'

30). The marriage indeed of which He there speaks, and at Rev. xix. 7, will not be celebrated till the end of the present age, while it is here as already present. We put the two statements in harmony with one another, when we keep in mind how distinct the espousals and the actual marriage were held in the East, and regard his first coming as the time of his espousals, while only at his second He leads home his bride.

'*And sent forth his servants*[1] *to call them that were bidden to the wedding*' (cf. Prov. ix. 3–5). In the corresponding parable of St. Luke (Luke xiv. 16–24), the giver of the feast, a private man, 'bade many.' Here we may assume a still more numerous company, from the higher rank and dignity of the giver of the feast, and the greater solemnity of the occasion (cf. Esth. i. 3–9). This summoning of those already bidden was, and, as modern travellers attest, is still, quite in accordance with Eastern customs; the second invitation being always verbal. Thus Esther invites Haman to a banquet on the morrow (Esth. v. 8); and when the time has actually arrived, the chamberlain comes to usher him to the banquet (vi. 14). There is therefore no slightest reason why we should make '*them that were bidden*' to mean them that were now *to be* bidden;[2] such an interpretation not merely violating all laws of grammar, but disturbing the higher purposes with which the parable was spoken; for our Lord, assuming that the guests had been invited long ago, does thus remind his hearers that what He brought, if in one sense new, was in another a fulfilment of the old; that He claimed to be heard not as one suddenly starting up, unconnected with anything which had gone before, but as Himself 'the end of the law,' to which it had been ever tending, the birth with which the whole Jewish dispensation had been pregnant, and which

[1] Technically, vocatores, invitatores, κλήτορες, δειπνοκλήτορες, ἐλέατροι.

[2] Thus Storr (*Opusc. Acad.* vol. i. p. 120) affirms τοὺς κεκλημένους may as well signify 'they that were to be bidden' as 'they that were bidden'! Did not this refute itself, Luke xiv. 16, 17 would be decisive in the matter.

alone should give a meaning to it all. In his words, '*them that were bidden*,' is involved the fact that there was nothing abrupt in the coming of his kingdom, that its rudiments had a long while before been laid, that all to which his adversaries clung as precious in their past history was prophetic of blessings now actually present to them in Him.[1] The original invitation, which had now come to maturity, reached back to the foundation of the Jewish commonwealth, was taken up and repeated by each succeeding prophet, as he prophesied of the crowning grace that should one day be brought to Israel (Luke x. 24; 1 Pet. i. 12), and summoned the people to hold themselves in a spiritual readiness to welcome their Lord and their King.

Yet the actual calling pertained not to these, the prophets of the older dispensation. They spoke of good things, but of good things to come. Not till the days of John the Baptist was the kingdom indeed present, was there any manifestation of the King's Son, any actual summoning of the guests, bidden long before, to come to the marriage (Luke iii. 4–6). By the first band of servants I should understand John the Baptist (Matt. iii. 2), the Twelve in that first mission which they accomplished during the lifetime of the Lord (Matt. x.) —and the Seventy (Luke x.). His own share in summoning the guests, inviting them, that is, unto Himself (Matt. iv. 17; Mark i. 14, 15), his 'Come unto Me,' naturally in the parable falls out of sight. It would have disturbed its proprieties had the king's son been himself a bearer of the invitation. A condescension so infinite would have seemed unnatural; for it is only the Son of the *heavenly* King who has ever stooped so far. He indeed was content, even while the marriage was made for Himself, to be as one of those sent forth to call the guests thereunto. It is not implied that on this first occasion the servants had any positive ill-usage to endure. They found

[1] Tertullian makes excellent use of this parable, or rather of its parallel (Luke xiv. 16), arguing against Marcion (*Con. Marc.* iv. 31), who would fain have cut loose the New Testament from the Old; cf. Irenæus, iv. 36.

indeed a general indifference to the message, and alienation from the messengers; but nothing worse. In agreement with this we have no record of any displays of active enmity against the apostles or disciples during the lifetime of the Lord,[1] nor at the first against the Lord Himself. It was simply, '*they would not come.*'

'*Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed*'—a token this of the immediate nearness of the feast[2]—'*and all things are ready; come unto the marriage*' (1 Kin. i. 9, 19). The king graciously assumes that these guests deferred their coming through some misunderstanding, unaware perhaps that all the preparations were completed; and instead of threatening and punishing, only bids the servants whom he now sends to press the message with greater instancy and distinctness than before. Something of this same gracious overlooking of the past breathes through the language of St. Peter in all his discourses after Pentecost, 'And, now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it' (Acts iii. 17), a willingness to regard the sin which hitherto the people had committed in the mildest possible light. This second summons I take to represent the invitation to the Jewish people, as it was renewed to them at the second epoch of the kingdom, that is, after the Resurrection and Ascension. It is true that of these events, as of the crucifixion no more, nothing is hinted in the parable, where indeed they could have found no room. It need not perplex us that this second company is spoken of as '*other servants*,' while, in fact, many of them were the same; for, in the first place, there *were* many now associated with these, as Paul,

[1] The death of John the Baptist cannot be urged as invalidating this assertion; for he by whose command he was murdered was an Edomite, not therefore one of the invited guests at all; and moreover it was for preaching the Law (Matt. xiv. 4), not the Gospel, that he died.

[2] Chardin (*Voy. en Perse*, vol. iv. p. 48): 'Mutton and lamb are killed in the morning to be eaten the same night. . . . The Persians believe that fresh-killed meat is the best (cf. Gen. xviii. 7, 8; xliii. 16; Prov. ix. 1–5).'

perhaps too as Stephen and Barnabas, who not till after Pentecost were added to the Church. Those, too, who *were* the same, yet went forth as other men, full of the Holy Ghost and with a message still more gracious than at the first; not preaching any more a kingdom of God at hand, but one already come—'Jesus and the resurrection;' declaring, which the servants had not been empowered to do on their first mission, that all things were now ready, that 'the fulness of time' had arrived, and that all obstacles to an entrance into the kingdom, which the sin of men had reared up, the grace of God had removed (Acts ii. 38, 39; iii. 19–26; iv. 12, 17, 30); that in that very blood which they had impiously shed, there was forgiveness of all sins, and free access to God.[1]

If the king's servants had found dull and deaf ears on their first mission, they find a more marked averseness from themselves and from their message on the second. The guests, when they heard the reiterated invitation, '*made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.*' The question presents itself, Can we trace a distinction between the several guests? Did the divine utterer of the parable intend a distinction? Perhaps, if we regard the first as one who went *to his estate* (and the word of the original will perfectly bear out this meaning), a distinction will appear. The first is the landed proprietor, the second the merchant. The first would *enjoy* what he already possesses, the second

[1] These missions (ver. 3, 4) have been sometimes differently understood. Thus Origen refers both to the sending of the prophets under the law; Jerome, confident that the first mission (ver. 3) is to be so understood, is more doubtful about the second. Gregory the Great (*Hom.* 38 *in Evang.*) ascribes the first to the prophets, and only the second to the Apostles: 'He therefore twice sent servants to invite guests, inasmuch as through the prophets He foretold the incarnation of the Only-Begotten, and after its accomplishment proclaimed it through the Apostles.' But Hilary's is the truer explanation (*Comm. in Matt.* in loc.): 'The servants who were sent to call them which were bidden are the Apostles: for it fell to them to warn those whom the prophets had bidden. Those who are sent forth the second time with the position of teachers, are apostolic men and the successors of the Apostles.'

would *acquire* what as yet is his only in hope and anticipation. The first represents the rich (1 Tim. vi. 17); the second those that desire to be rich (1 Tim. vi. 9). This will agree with Luke xiv. 18, 19; where the guest who has bought a piece of land, and must needs go and see it, has already entered into the first condition; the guest who must try his five yoke of oxen, belongs to the second. The temptations which beset the *having* and the *getting*, though nearly allied, are not always and altogether the same; there is quite difference enough between them to account for the mention of them both. One of the guests being urged to come, turned to that which by his own toil, or the toil of others who went before him, he had already won—another to that which he was in the process of winning.[1] We have here those who are full, and those who are striving to be full; and on both the woe pronounced at Luke vi. 25 has come. This apparent fulness proves a real emptiness; keeping men away from Him who would have indeed filled and satisfied their souls.

But these are not the worst. '*The remnant took his servants and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.*' The oppositions to the truth are not merely *natural*, they are also *devilish*. Of those who reject the Gospel of the grace of God, there are some who do not so much actively hate it, as that they love the world better than they love it. We have just heard of these. But there are others in whom it raises a fierce opposition, whose pride it wounds, whose self-righteousness it offends; who, where they dare, will visit on the bringers of the message the hate which they bear to itself. Three forms of outrage are enumerated here: and how full a commentary on these prophetic words do the Acts of the Apostles, and much else in the later Scriptures, supply.

[1] Bengel, with his rare skill in detecting the finer allusions of Scripture, exactly so: 'One was kept back by a false sense of self-sufficiency, another by the lust for gain.' Gerhard suggests the same explanation (*Harm. Evang.* 153): 'By those who go their ways to their merchandise we should understand such as are intent upon riches yet to be acquired; by those who go to their farm, such as take a sinful pleasure in wealth already won and acquired.'

Those who should have received with all honours these ambassadors of the great King '*took*,' or laid violent hands on, them (Acts iv. 3; v. 18; viii. 3); they '*entreated them spitefully*' (Acts v. 40; xiv. 5, 19; xvi. 23; xvii. 5; xxi. 30; xxiii. 2; 1 Thess. ii. 15); they '*slew them*' (Acts vii. 58; xii. 2; cf. Matt. xxiii. 34; John xvi. 2).[1]

'*But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth*:' or better, '*But the king was wroth*;' what is more being a gloss. The insult was to him, and was intended for him; as in every case where an ambassador is outraged, it is his master and sender whom the blow was intended to reach (2 Sam. x.). As such it is punished; for the king '*sent forth his armies*,' that is, as some say, God sent forth his avenging angels, the armies in heaven (Rev. xix. 14), the legions at his bidding there (Matt. xxvi. 53; 1 Kin. xxii. 19; 2 Sam. xxiv. 16):[2] or, it may be, the hosts of Rome[3] (Dan. ix. 26), which were equally '*his armies*,' since even ungodly men are men of God's hand, by whom He punishes his own people that have sinned, or executes vengeance on others more wicked than themselves (thus Isai. x. 5, 'O Assyrian, the rod of *mine* anger;' cf. xiii. 5; Ezek. xvi. 41; xxix. 18–20; Jer. xxii. 7; xxv. 9, 'Nebuchadnezzar, *my servant*'). The two explanations do in fact flow into one; for when God's judgments are abroad, the earthly and visible ministers of those judgments and the unseen armies of heaven are evermore leagued together. The natural eye sees only those, the spiritual eye beholds the other behind them. It is ever at such moments as it was with Israel of old (1 Chron. xxi. 16). The multitude,

[1] See 2 Chron. xxx. 10 for an interesting parallel. When Hezekiah restored the worship of Jehovah at Jerusalem, he sent messengers throughout all the tribes, inviting all Israel to take part in the solemn passover which he was about to keep: 'so the posts passed from city to city; . . . but they laughed them to scorn and mocked them;' yet not all; there were guests who accepted the invitation; 'divers humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem.'

[2] Gregory the Great (*Hom.* 38 *in Evang.*): 'For what are those hosts of angels save the armies of our King.'

[3] So Irenæus, *Con. Hær.* iv. 36. 6.

to whom the purged spiritual eye was wanting, beheld only the outward calamity, the wasting pestilence; but 'David lifted up his eyes and saw the angel of the Lord stand between the earth and heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem.'[1] But to proceed. With those armies thus sent forth he '*destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city;*' the city, that is, of those murderers; no longer that of the great King, who will not own it for his any more. Compare our Lord's word a little later: '*Your* house is left unto you desolate (xxiii. 38); *your* house, and not mine; however it may still bear my name;' and see Exod. xxiii. 7. This city is of course Jerusalem, the central point of the Jewish theocracy (Matt. xxiii. 34, 35; Luke xiii. 33, 34; Acts vii. 39; xii. 2, 3); burned once already (2 Kin. xxv. 9; Jer. xxxix. 8; lii. 13) as was the constant doom of a taken city (Num. xxxi. 10; Josh. vi. 24; viii. 19; xi. 11; Judg. i. 8; xviii. 27; xx. 40; Isai. i. 7; Jer. ii. 15; xxi. 10; Amos i. 7; 1 Macc. i. 31; v. 28, 35, 65; x. 84; and often); and now threatened with a repetition of the same terrible fate.

'*Then*[2] *saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready; but they which were bidden were not worthy.*' The Scripture does not refuse to recognize a worthiness in men (Matt. x. 10, 11; Luke xx. 35; xxi. 36; 2 Thess. i. 5, 11; Rev. iii. 4); nor is it any paradox to say that this worthiness largely consists in a sense of unworthiness; the unworthiness, on the other hand, of those whom the bidden represent consisting in the

[1] Even the heathen could understand this. When Troy was perishing, the poet describes the multitude as seeing only their Grecian enemies engaged in the work of destruction; but to Æneas, when his goddess mother had purged his eyes, there appeared other foes; to him

> Apparent diræ facies, *inimicaque Trojæ*
> *Numina magna Deûm.*—*Æn.* ii. 601–623.
> 'Dread faces, mighty presences of gods,
> Are seen, ranged against Troy.'

[2] Keil: 'The "then" must not be pressed. The parable is not an historical enumeration of the several facts according to their chronological order, but an imaginary narration in which the several stages of the action are bound together according to their essential connection.

absence of any such divine hunger in their hearts after a righteousness which they had not, as would have brought them, eager guests, to the marriage supper of the Lamb. '*Go ye therefore into the highways*,[1] *and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage*.'[2] Compare Matt. viii. 11, 12, which contains, so to speak, this parable in the germ. There, as here, that truth long ago foreannounced by Psalmist (Ps. xviii. 43, 44) and by prophet (Isai. lxv. 1), but not the less strange and unwelcome to Jewish ears (see Acts xxii. 21, 22), the calling of the Gentiles, and that by occasion of the disobedience of the Jews, the diminishing of these which should prove the riches of those (Rom. xi.), is plainly declared.

'*So these servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good*.' In the spirit of this command, 'Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them' there (Acts viii. 5); Peter baptized Cornelius and his company (x. 48); and Paul proclaimed to the men of Athens how God now commanded '*all men everywhere* to repent' (xvii. 30). When it is said they gathered in '*bad*' as well as '*good*,'—in which statement there is a passing over from the figure to the reality, since moral qualities would scarcely be predicated of the

[1] These διέξοδοι (cf. διεκβολαί, Obad. 14) may be transitus or exitus (Passow gives both meanings, Durchgang and Ausgang): the thoroughfares (see Ps. i. 3) or the outlets leading from the city (Grotius: Viæ extra urbem ducentes), or such as led to its places and squares (Kuinoel: Compita viarum), or the points where many roads or streets meet; Chrysostom (*Hom.* 69 *in Matth.*) more than once substituting τριόδους (Schleusner: 'Places where several roads meet'); ἀρχαὶ δύο ὁδῶν (Ezek. xxxi. 21); the Revised Version for 'highways' has 'partings of the highways.' All these have their fitness, as places of concourse and resort, where therefore the servants might hope the soonest to gather a company. We must not permit our English '*highways*' to suggest places in the country as distinguished from the town; the image throughout is of a city, in which the rich and great and noble, those naturally pointed out as a king's guests, refuse his banquet, whereupon the poor of the same city are brought in to share it.

[2] This entertaining of the poor by great men and kings is often referred to in Jewish writings as not unusual (Schoettgen, *Hor. Heb.* vol. i. pp. 174, 289: cf. Luke xiv. 13).

guests as such,—this is not to prepare and account for one presently being found without a wedding garment. '*Bad*' here is not equivalent to '*not having a wedding garment*' there; on the contrary, many were '*bad*' when invited (1 Cor. vi. 9–11), who, accepting the invitation, passed into the number of the '*good*:' for the beautiful words of Augustine on Christ's love to his Church may find here their application, 'He loved her foul, that He might make her fair.'[1] Neither may '*bad and good*,' least of all the latter, be pressed too far: for in strictest speech none are '*good*' till they have been joined to Him, who only is the Good (Matt. xix. 17), and made sharers in his Spirit. At the same time there are varieties of moral life, even anterior to obedience to the Gospel call. There are '*good*,' such as Nathanael, as Cornelius, as those Gentiles that were a law to themselves (Rom. ii. 14; cf. Luke viii. 15); and '*bad*,' in whom the sin common to all has wrought more mightily than in others (Ps. lviii. 3–5); the sickness of which the whole body of humanity is sick, concentrating itself in some of the members more than in others.[2] The kingdom of heaven is as a draw-

[1] Fœdam amavit, ut pulchram faceret; a thought which he pursues elsewhere (*In* 1 *Ep. Joh. Tract.* 9): 'He first loved us who himself is ever beautiful. And what were those He loved save foul and ill-favoured? His meaning, therefore, was not to cast us out as foul, but to change us, and make us beautiful instead of ill-favoured. How shall we become beautiful? By loving him who is ever beautiful. As love increases in thee, so also beauty increases, for love itself is the beauty of the soul.'

[2] Jerome: 'Among the Gentiles also there is infinite diversity, since we know that some are inclined to vice and rush upon evil, while others, by reason of the grace of their dispositions, give themselves up to virtue.' Augustine's conflict with the Pelagians would have hindered him from expressing himself exactly thus, and he will only allow these '*good*' to be 'less evil' than the others. Yet he too is most earnest against the abuse of these words, which should argue from them for allowing men to come to baptism without having faithfully renounced, as far as human eye could see, all their past ungodliness; for that were to make the servants of the householder themselves the sowers of the tares (*De Fide et Oper.* 17). Ambrose (*Exp. in Luc.* vii. 202): 'He bids both good and bad to enter, that He may increase the good and turn the

net, which brings within its ample folds of the best and of the worst, of those who have been before honestly striving after a righteousness according to the law (Rom. ii. 14, 15), and of those who have been utterly 'dead in trespasses and sins.'— '*And the wedding was furnished with guests.*'

At this point the other and earlier spoken parable concludes (Luke xiv. 16); but what constitutes the whole in it is only as the first act in this present; and another judgment act is still in reserve. The judgment of the avowed foe has found place; that of the false friend has still to follow. Hitherto the parable has set forth to us the guilt and punishment of them who openly reject the Gospel of the grace of God; as the great body of the Jewish people with their chiefs and rulers were doing. It is now for others, and contains an earnest warning for as many as have found a place in his kingdom. Besides the separation between those who come and those who refuse to come, it shall be also proved who among the actual comers are walking worthy of their vocation, and who not; and as it is thus or thus, there shall be a second sifting and separation. But as in the parable of the Tares it was not the office of the servants to distinguish between the tares and the wheat (Matt. xiii. 29, 30), as little is it their office here to separate decisively between worthy partakers of the heavenly banquet and unworthy intruders; and, indeed, how should it be, seeing that the garment which distinguishes those from these is worn, not on the body, but on the heart?[1] This separating act is for another, for One to whom all hearts are open and manifest, who only can carry it through with no liability to error (Heb. iv. 13). It is of Him, 'whose fan is in his hand and who will throughly purge his floor,' that we now hear.

disposition of the bad to better things; that so that may be fulfilled which was read: "then the wolves and the lambs shall feed together.'"

[1] Augustine: 'For that garment was looked for in the heart, not on the body.'

'*And when the king came in to see*[1] *the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment.*' It pertained to the dignity of the king, that he should not appear till all were assembled, nor, indeed, till all had occupied their places; for that the guests were arranged, and as we, though with a certain incorrectness, should say, seated, is implied in the word which describes them now.[2] At a glance he detected one, a spot in that feast (Jude 12), who, apparelled as he was, should not have presumed to take his place at a royal festival, or enter a royal presence. Him he addresses, as yet with a gentle compellation, for possibly he can explain away his apparent contempt; and he shall have the opportunity of doing so, if he can; '*Friend, how*[3] *camest thou in hither, not having*[4] *a wedding garment?*' But explanation to offer he had none; '*he was speechless.*' Why could he not answer that it was unreasonable to expect of him, brought in of a sudden and without warning from the highways, to be furnished with such?—that he was too poor to provide,—or that no time had been allowed him to go home and fetch,—such a garment? Some willing to get rid of any semblance of harshness in the after conduct of the king, and fearing lest such might

[1] Or better 'to behold' (θεάσασθαι) 'the guests,' as in the Revised Version. The Vulgate, which has ut *videret*, is not so good as the earlier Italic, ut *inspiceret*.

[2] Τοὺς ἀνακειμένους = discumbentes (Vulg.): 'the men sitting at the meat' (Wiclif).

[3] Bengel: 'By what favour of the servants? By what daring of thine own?'

[4] The subjective, and not the objective, particle of negation is here used, μή and not οὐ—μὴ ἔχων ἔνδυμα γάμου, 'not having (and knowing that thou hadst not) a wedding garment.'—The ἔνδυμα γάμου is not exactly the ἱμάτιον νυμφικόν of Plutarch (*Amator.* 10), for that is the garment not of the guests, but of the bridegroom; nor yet the ἐσθὴς νυμφική of Charito, i. p. 6, which is that of the bride (Becker, *Charicles*, vol. ii. p. 467). Yet may there not lie under this phrase, which seems to belong rather to the bridegroom than to the guests, a hint that the true adornment of each of these is identical with his? from Him they have it; it is like that which He wears Himself: for Christians are reflexions, copies, most faulty and imperfect it is true, but still copies of Christ.

redound on Him whom the king represents, maintain that no such excuse would have served, or would really have touched the point which the king's question raised. They remind us that in the East, when kings or great personages made an entertainment, they were wont to present costly dresses to the guests; that such a custom is here tacitly assumed; and therefore that this guest could only appear at the wedding not having such a garment, because he had rejected it when offered to him; in the same act pouring contempt on the gift and on the giver, and declaring plainly that he counted his ordinary work-day apparel, with any soil and stain which it might have gathered, sufficiently good in which to appear in the presence of the king.

Many, however, deny that any certain traces of such a custom can anywhere be found, that what alone resembles such a usage is the modern custom of clothing with a caftan those admitted into the presence of the Sultan. It must be owned that Judg. xiv. 13, often adduced in proof, proves nothing; and perhaps no distinct evidence of any such practice is forthcoming. Still we know enough of the undoubted customs of the East to make it extremely likely that presents of dresses were often distributed among the guests at a marriage festival, especially at one like the present, celebrated with great pomp and magnificence; and if this were the case, our Lord's hearers, to whom those customs were familiar, would naturally have supplied the omission in the parable, and taken for granted such a gift going before; most of all, when they found one so severely punished for a want which in any other case he could scarcely have avoided. We know, in the first place, that it was and is part of the magnificence of Oriental princes and potentates to have vast stores of costly dresses laid up, a large portion of their wealth being often invested in these (Job xxvii. 16; Isai. iii. 6; Jam. v. 2; 2 Kin. x. 22).[1] We know, moreover, that costly

[1] The story told by Horace (*Ep.* i. 6. 40) of the five thousand mantles which Lucullus, on examining his wardrobe, found that he possessed, is well known; and Chardin, whose accuracy all later in-

dresses were often given as marks of peculiar favour (Gen. xli. 42; xlv. 22; Judg. xiv. 19; 1 Sam. xviii. 4; 2 Kin. v. 5, 22; x. 22; Dan. v. 7; Esth. vi. 8; viii. 15; 1 Macc. x. 20, 62); [1] being then, as now, the most customary gift; that marriage festivals (Esth. ii. 18), and other seasons of festal rejoicing (2 Sam. vi. 19), were naturally those at which gifts were distributed with the largest hand. Gifts of costly raiment it would certainly be expected should be worn at once; [2] so proclaiming the magnificence of the giver, and adding to the splendour of the time;—not to say that a slighting of the gift is in the very nature of things a slighting of the giver.[3]

quirers into Eastern customs join in praising, is here to the point (*Voy. en Perse*, vol. iii. p. 230): 'One would not believe the expense to which the King of Persia is put for these presents. The number of robes which he gives is countless. His wardrobes are always kept full; and the robes are kept in stores duly sorted.'

[1] Add to these passages Homer, *Il.* xxiv. 228, sqq.; Xenophon, *Cyrop.* viii. 3. 1.

[2] See Plutarch, *Pompeius*, 36.

[3] We have examples in the modern East (and Eastern manners so little change that modern examples are nearly as good as ancient) of a vizier losing his life through this very failing to wear a garment of honour sent to him by the king. The story is in Chardin. The officer through whose hands the royal robe passed, out of spite, sent a plain habit in its stead. To have appeared in this would have implied that the vizier was in disgrace at court; he therefore substituted another dress, a gift of the late king, and in that made his public entry into the city. When this was known at court, men declared the vizier a dog, that he had disdainfully thrown aside the royal apparel, saying, 'I have no need of Shah Sefi's habits;' and they so incensed the king, that it cost the vizier his life (Burder, *Orient. Liter.* vol. i. p. 94; cf. Herodotus, ix. 111, for the manner in which the rejecting of a monarch's gift was resented).—Olearius (*Travels*, p. 214), with the ambassadors in whose train he went, was invited to the table of the Persian king. 'It was told us,' he goes on to say, 'by the mehmander, that we according to their usage must hang the splendid vests that were sent us from the king over our dresses, and so appear in his presence. The ambassadors at first refused; but the mehmander urged it so earnestly, alleging, as also did others, that the omission would greatly displease the king, since all other envoys observed such a custom, that at last they consented, and hanged, as did we also, the splendid vests over their shoulders, and so the cavalcade proceeded.' We gather from this

But this rejection of the gift, if such may be safely assumed, involved a further affront—namely, the appearing of this guest at a high festival in unsuitable, probably in mean and sordid, apparel. Even with us there are occasions when this would be felt as a serious lack of respect; much more in those Eastern lands where outward symbols possess so much more significance than with us.[1] It is evident, too, that the more honourable the person, and the more solemn the occasion, the more flagrant the offence; here the person is a king, and the occasion the marriage of his son. And thus, however others may have been forward to say many things in this guest's behalf,—as that he could not help appearing as he did, or that his fault, after all, was a trivial one,—*he* did not count that he had anything to say for himself; '*he was speechless*,' or literally, his mouth was stopped, he was gagged,[2] with no plea to allege for his contemptuous behaviour He stood self-condemned,[3] at once convinced and convicted, and his judgment did not tarry; but of that presently.

When we seek to give a spiritual signification to this part of the parable, many questions, and some most important,

passage that, strictly speaking, there was no actual changing of apparel, but the garment of honour was either a vest drawn over the other garments, or a mantle hung on the shoulders. Schulz describes that given to him as 'a long robe with loose sleeves, which hang down (for the arm is not put into them), the white ground of which is goat's hair, mixed with some silver, but the flowers woven in are of gold-coloured silk.' He too mentions the necessity of putting it on before appearing in the presence of the Sultan (Rosenmüller, *Alte und Neue Morgenl.* vol. v. p. 76; see also Schuyler, *Turkistan*, 1876, vol. ii. pp. 40, 41).

[1] Irenæus, then, puts it well when he says (iv. 36. 6): 'The man who has not on a marriage garment, that is a scoffer.' And what stress Cicero lays (*In Vatin.* 12, 13) on the fact that Vatinius once appeared clad in black at a high festival (supplicatio)—how much of wanton indignity and insult he saw in it toward the giver of the feast and the other guests.

[2] Ἐφιμώθη, from φιμός (= ἐπιστόμιον), a gag. The word is used in its literal sense, 1 Tim. v. 18. Chrysostom explains it well, 'he condemned himself.'

[3] For, in Cicero's words, 'Silence is a form of confession.'

demand an answer. And first, *When* does the great King come in '*to see*' or to scrutinize, '*the guests*?' In one sense He is doing so evermore; as often as by any judgment-act hypocrites are revealed, or self-deceivers laid bare to themselves or to others;[1]—at every time of trial, which is also in its very nature a time of separation, He does it. But while this is true, while we must not relegate to a day of final judgment all in this kind, which, indeed, is continually going forward, it is not the less true that for that day the complete separation is reserved; and then all that has been partially fulfilling in one and another will be altogether fulfilled in all.

But the guest himself '*which had not on a wedding garment*'—does he represent one or many? Some unwilling to let go the singleness of this guest, and fain to hold it fast in the interpretation of the parable, have suggested that Judas Iscariot may be immediately intended.[2] Assuredly a mistake, except in so far as words having their fitness for every hypocrite and deceiver had eminently their fitness for him. Others of the historico-prophetical school, as Vitringa and Cocceius, see in him the man of sin,[3] by whom they understand the Pope. It is little likely, however, that any single person is intended, but rather that many are included in this

[1] Augustine: 'God enters the judgment seat, who in his longsuffering abides without;' and the *Auct. Oper. Imperf.*: 'The king must be held to enter when God makes trial of men, that it may appear what degree of virtue each man has, and whether he be worthy of the place which he holds in the Church.'

[2] Thus Pseudo-Athanasius (*De Parab. Script.*); and in later times Weisse (*Evang. Gesch.* vol. ii. p. 114).

[3] So Gurtler (*Syst. Theol. Proph.* p. 676), who urges in confirmation the address, ἑταῖρε (=friend, partner, comrade): 'Antichrist is in a peculiar sense ἑταῖρος, since he proclaims himself Christ's vicar, and places by the side of Christ's throne the throne of his own wickedness.'—The Jews have a curious tradition about Esau, who is their standing type of Antichrist, that he will be such a guest thrust out from the kingdom of God. It is found in the Jerusalem Talmud, and is as follows: 'Esau the wicked will veil himself with his mantle, and sit among the righteous in Paradise in the world to come: and the holy blessed God will draw him and bring him out from thence: which is the sense of those words, Obad. 6.'

one; the '*few*' presently said to be '*chosen*,' as compared with the '*many called*' suggesting that a great sifting has found place. Why this '*many*' cast out should be represented as a single person has been explained in various ways. Townson instances it as an example of what he happily calls 'the lenity of supposition,' which marks our Lord's parables; just as in another *one* servant only is brought forward as failing to turn his lord's money to account (Matt. xxv. 18; Luke xix. 20). Gerhard ingeniously suggests, that 'if many had been thrust out from the marriage, the nuptial festivities might appear to have been disturbed.' But more valuable is another suggestion which he offers, namely, that the matter is thus brought home to the conscience of every man: 'so diligent and exact will be the future scrutiny, that not so much as one in all that great multitude of men shall on the last day escape the piercing eyes of the Judge.'[1] Nor is there any difficulty in thus contemplating the whole multitude of evil-doers as a single person. For as the faithful are one, being gathered under their one head, which is Christ, so the congregation of the wicked are one, being gathered also under their one head, which is Satan. The mystical Babylon is one city no less than the mystical Jerusalem. There is a *kingdom* of darkness (Matt. xii. 25, 26), as well as a kingdom of God.[2]

What the wedding garment itself is, and what he lacked,

[1] Cajetan the same: 'A most exact discernment amid this great multitude is here described, for God so sees all men that He has an individual care for each of them, and therefore we have here a single man described as being seen.'

[2] Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* lxi. 4): 'Amid that great crowd of guests one man was taken from the banquet and consigned to punishment. But the Lord, willing to show that this one man is one body made up of many, when He ordered him to be cast forth and consigned to the due punishment, immediately added: "For many are called, but few are chosen." . . . Who were the chosen, if not those who remained? Yet only one was cast forth, and many remained. How, if only one out of many was cast forth, can the elect be few unless in this one many were contained?' See also *Con. Don. post Coll.* 20. We have the exact converse of this, 1 Cor. ix. 24; where the whole number *of the elect* are included in the '*one*' that receives the prize.

who had it not, has been abundantly disputed. Was it faith? or was it charity? or was it both? That it was something indispensable is self-evident, and theologians of the Roman Church, eager to draw an argument from hence that charity is the one indispensable grace, have urged that it must have been charity, and not faith, which this unworthy guest was without; for faith, as they argue, he must have had, seeing that without that he would not have been present at the feast at all. But, arguing thus, they take advantage of the double meaning of the word faith, and play off its use as a bare assent to, or intellectual belief in, the truth, against St. Paul's far deeper use;—and this with injustice, since only in the latter sense would any attribute this guest's exclusion to his wanting faith. Were it needful so to limit the meaning of the wedding garment that it must signify *either* faith or charity, far better to restrain it to the former. Such would be the deeper and truer interpretation, since the flower is wrapped up in the root, but not the root in the flower, and so charity in faith, but not faith in charity.[1] There is, however, no need so to determine for one of these interpretations, as to exclude the other. The foremost teachers of the early Church put themselves in no contradiction with one another, when some of them asserted that what the intruder lacked was charity, and others faith; nor with themselves, when they gave now the one interpretation, and now the other.[2] For what

[1] These according to Ignatius (*Ad Ephes.* 14) are 'the beginning and end of life; faith the beginning, love the end.'

[2] The Fathers generally contemplate the wedding garment as charity, or holiness. Thus Irenæus (iv. 36. 6): 'Those who were called to the supper of the Lord, because of their evil conversation did not receive the Holy Spirit;' Tertullian (*De Resur. Carnis*, 27): 'Holiness of the flesh;' Leo: 'The garment of virtues;' Origen: 'the robe of virtue;' Hilary: 'The marriage garment is the glory of the Holy Spirit and the whiteness of the celestial robe, which has been received by the confession of a good interrogation and is kept whole and undefiled unto the assembly of the Kingdom of Heaven;' so Gregory the Great, *Hom.* 38 *in Evang.* This is the predominant, though not the exclusive, sense given to it in our *Exhortation to the Holy Communion*; with which compare Chrysostom, *Hom.* 3, *in Ephes.*, quoted by Bingham (*Christ. Antt.* xv. 4. 2).

this guest wanted was *righteousness*, both in its root of faith and its flower of charity. He had not, according to the pregnant image of St. Paul, here peculiarly appropriate, '*put on* Christ;' in which putting on of Christ, both faith and charity are included,—faith as the investing power, charity or holiness as the invested robe.[1] By faith we recognize a righteousness out of and above us, and which yet is akin to us, and wherewith our spirits can be clothed; which righteousness is in Christ, who is therefore the Lord our Righteousness. And

Yet Grotius, who gives for his own explanation, 'walking worthy of our calling,' affirms too much, saying: 'Thus the ancient commentators on this passage, with great unanimity:' for Ambrose (*De Fide*, iv. 1) speaks of the 'marriage garment of faith;' though elsewhere (*De Pœnit.* i .6) he says: 'He is rejected who has not on a marriage garment, the cloak, that is of charity, the robe of grace;' and again, uniting his two former expositions (*Exp. in Luc.* vii. 204): 'The marriage garment, that is, faith and charity:' with which Augustine (*Serm.* 90) consents: 'Have faith with love, this is the marriage garment;' the *Auct. Oper. Imperf.*: 'The marriage garment is true faith, which is through Jesus Christ and his righteousness;' see also Basil the Great (*in Esai.* ix) for a like interpretation. The author of the Second Clementine Epistle, § 6, will have understood baptism as the wedding garment, if indeed there is reference to this parable in his words: ἡμεῖς, ἐὰν μὴ τηρήσωμεν τὸ βάπτισμα ἁγνὸν καὶ ἀμίαντον, ποίᾳ πεποιθήσει εἰσελευσόμεθα εἰς τὸ βασίλειον τοῦ Θεοῦ; To give this application of the words any probability, we must take βασίλειον here as palace, and not as = βασιλείαν: 'Except we keep our baptism holy and undefiled, with what confidence shall we enter into the palace of God?'

[1] So Gerhard: 'The marriage garment is Christ, who in these nuptials is both the bridegroom and the food. For we put on Christ alike when by faith we lay hold of his merit, so that our nakedness in the presence of God's judgment may be covered with his righteousness, as with a costly garment, and also when by holy conversation we tread in his footsteps (Rom. xiii. 14), since Christ has not only been given us as a gift, but also set before us as an example;' and Jerome's words are remarkable; 'a marriage garment, that is the garment of the supracelestial man,'—while the sordid garment is 'the clothing of the old man.' Compare the *Shepherd* of Hermas (iii. sim. 9, 13); he sees in his vision some virgins, and is told that they represent the chief Christian virtues; 'These are holy spirits, for a man may by no other means enter the kingdom of God if these do not clothe him with their garment. Yea, it will profit thee nothing to receive the name of the son of God, unless also thou shalt receive from these their garment.'

this righteousness by the appropriative and assimilative power of faith we also make our own; we are clothed upon with it, so that it becomes, in that singularly expressive term, our *habit*,[1]—the righteousness imputed has become also a righteousness infused, and is in us charity or holiness, or more accurately still, constitutes the complex of all Christian graces as they abide in the man, and show themselves in his life.

Setting aside then all narrower interpretations, not as erroneous, but as insufficient, we may affirm of the wedding garment that it is righteousness in its largest sense, the whole adornment of the new and spiritual man; including the faith without which it is impossible to please God (Heb. xi. 6), and the holiness without which no man shall see Him (Heb. xii. 14), or shall, like this guest, only see Him to perish at his presence. It is at once the faith which is the root of all graces, the mother of all virtues, and likewise those graces and virtues themselves. Whether we contemplate this guest as a self-righteous person, trusting in a righteousness of his own, instead of a righteousness of Christ's, imputed and imparted,—or see in him a more ordinary sinner, who with the Christian profession and privileges is yet walking after the flesh and not after the spirit,—in either case the image holds good; he is rejecting something, even the true robe of his

[1] This image runs through all Scripture, its frequent use attesting its fitness. Thus we are bidden to put on the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. xiii. 14), to put off the old, to put on the new, man (Col. iii. 10; Ephes. iv. 22), to put on the several pieces of the armour of God (Ephes. vi. 13–16; 1 Thess. v. 8); baptism is a putting on of Christ (Gal. iii. 27; cf. Pom. xiii. 12; Ezek. xvi. 10; Job. xxix. 14; Isai. lxi. 10; Ecclus. vi. 31; xxvii. 8). Schoettgen (*Hor. Heb.* vol. i. p. 699) shows in some remarkable quotations that the mystery of putting on a righteousness from above was not wholly hidden from the Jews. And as grace is put on here, so glory in the kingdom which shall come: 'He that overcometh the same *shall be clothed* in white raiment' Rev. iii. 5; iv. 4; vi. 11; vii. 9; 2 Esd. ii. 39, 45). In the book of Enoch these garments are 'garments of life.' Angels, according to Jewish tradition, strip off the grave-clothes from every one who enters Paradise, and clothe him in white and glistering raiment (Eisenmenger, *Entd. Judenth.* vol. ii. p. 310).

spirit, bestowed on him when he was made a member of Christ;[1] and which if he has since let go, he may yet, on the strength of that gift, freely at any moment reclaim; he is a despiser, counting himself good enough merely as he is in himself, in the flesh and not in the spirit (John iii. 6), to appear in the presence of God (Prov. xvi. 2). But a time arrives when every man will discover that he needs another covering, another array for his soul; that this is a garment narrower than he can wrap himself withal. It is woe to him, if, like the guest of this parable, he only discovers this, when it is too late to provide himself with such; and then suddenly stands confessed to himself and to others in all his moral nakedness and shame. As it was the king's word which struck the intruder speechless, so will it be the light of God shining round and shining in upon the sinner, which will one day reveal to him all the hidden things of his heart, all that evil whereof he has hitherto wilfully chosen to be ignorant, but now can remain ignorant no longer. He then, like the unworthy guest, will be '*speechless*.' However forward he may have been in other times to justify himself, as there are now a thousand cloaks for sins (Gen. iii. 12, 13; Jam. i. 13; 1 Sam. xv. 21), in that day his mouth will be stopped; he will not even pretend to offer any plea why judgment should not proceed against him at once.

'*Then said the king to the servants*,'—to the 'ministering attendants' rather, for they differ both in name and office from the '*servants*' that brought in the guests,[2] being no other than the angels, who 'shall gather out of the kingdom all things that offend, and all that do iniquity' (Matt. xiii. 41, 49; Luke xix. 24)—'*Bind him hand and foot*;' which work of the heavenly *lictors* is by some understood to express that upon the sinner the night is come, in which no man can work, that for him all opportunities of repentance and amendment are gone by. I take it rather to express the impotence

[1] See one of Schleiermacher's *Taufreden* (*Predigten*, vol. iv. p. 787).

[2] Those were δοῦλοι (ver. 3, 4), these are διάκονοι (cf. John ii. 5, 9). See my *Synonyms of the N. T.* § ix.

to which in a moment every proud fighter against God will be reduced.[1] The hands by whose aid resistance, the feet by whose help escape, might have been meditated, are alike deprived of all power and motion (Acts xxi. 11; 2 Sam. iii. 34). This agrees better with that '*take him away*,' which follows, being the sinner's exclusion from the Church now glorious and triumphant in heaven (Matt. xiii. 48; 2 Thess. i. 9). Nor is the penalty merely privative; it is not only this loss of good, but also the presence of evil.[2] They who carry out the judgment shall '*cast him into outer darkness*.' The phrase occurs only in St. Matthew, but there thrice; viii. 12; xxiv. 30; and here. The imagery is suggested by the parable itself. Within the king's palace is feasting and light and joy; without is desolation and darkness and cold. Not otherwise does the '*outer darkness*' lie wholly beyond and external to God's kingdom of light and joy;[3] for as light is the element of that kingdom, so whatever is outside of that kingdom is

[1] H. de Sto. Victore: 'With hands and feet bound, that is, with his power of well doing utterly taken away;' but Grotius better: 'This denotes τὸ ἄμαχον καὶ τὸ ἄφευκτον, the irresistible and inevitable character of the punishment divinely appointed;' cf. Plato, *Gorgias*, 526 e. Zechariah (v. 8) supplies an instructive parallel. The woman whose name is Wickedness sitting securely in the ephah, or great *measure* of God's judgments, which she has filled, is forcibly thrust down into it; and its mouth is then stopped with the huge mass of lead, that she may never raise herself again. Jerome (in loc.): 'The angel cast the woman headlong into the midst of the ephah: . . . and lest haply she should again raise her head, and rejoice in her wickedness and impiety, he casts upon the mouth of the ephah a talent of lead after the manner of a very heavy stone, that he may crush and confine Impiety in the midst of the ephah, lest by some means she may break forth.' The women with wings, who bear away the ephah, will further correspond to the servants here; and the outer darkness here to the land of Shinar there, the profane land, whither the vessel and its burden are borne. The whole vision too (v. 5–11) has its similarity to this parable; for that and this speak alike of the cleansing of the Church by judgment-acts of separation upon the sinners in it.

[2] Augustine, *Serm.* xxxi. 5.

[3] Peter Lombard (iv. dist. 50): 'The darkness shall be outer darkness, because then the sinners shall be utterly out of God's presence. . . . They shall be utterly removed from the light of God.'

darkness—even that exterior or '*outer darkness*' into which all fall back, who, refusing to walk in the light of God's truth, fail to attain in the end to the light of everlasting life (cf. Wisd. xvii. 21; xviii. 1). '*There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*;' something on these words has been said already; see p. 105.[1] With all this it is interesting to compare Zeph. i. 7, 8: 'The Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, He hath bid his guests. And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes and the king's children, and all such as are *clothed with strange apparel*.'[2]

Christ moralizes the whole parable, as He had already done that of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Matt. xx. 16), with those solemn words, '*For many are called, but few are chosen*' (cf. 1 Cor. ix. 24). To these '*called*' and not '*chosen*' belong others beside this unworthy guest; for the words are intended to include those who did not so much as seem (which he had done) to embrace the invitation, and who expiated their contumacy in the destruction of themselves and their city. And how many of the severer dealings of God with those who, within the Covenant, yet despise the mercies of that Covenant, do these words sum up. They are evermore finding their fulfilment. They were fulfilled on a scale how large in the history of that entire generation which went out of Egypt; these were all '*called*' to a kingdom, yet were not in the end '*chosen*,' since with most of them God was not well pleased, and they died in the wilderness (Num. xiv. 22–30; 1 Cor. x. 1–10; Heb. iii. 7–9; Jude 5). They were fulfilled on a smaller scale in those twelve, to whom it was given the first to see the promised land; two only drew strength and encouragement from that sight, and they only were '*chosen*' to inherit it (Num. xiv. 23, 24). They found their fulfilment in the thirty and two thousand of Gideon's army; these all were '*called*,' but only three hundred were

[1] See Meuschen (*N. T. ex. Talm. illust.* p. 106) and Pfeiffer (*Opp.* p. 861) for a Jewish parable bearing some resemblance to the present.

[2] Ἐνδεδυμένους ἐνδύματα ἀλλότρια (LXX).

found worthy, and in the end '*chosen*' to be helpers in and sharers of his victory,—such a sifting and winnowing had there previously been (Judg. vii.). They were fulfilled too in a type and figure, when of all the maidens brought together to the palace of the Persian king, Esther alone was '*chosen*' by him, and found lasting favour in his sight[1] (Esth. ii.).

[1] H. de Sto. Victore (*De Arrhâ Animæ*) makes excellent application of Esther's history to the matter in hand: 'See how many were chosen that one should be made choice of, even she who to the eyes of the king should seem fairer and comelier than the rest. The servants of the king choose many for adornment, the king himself chooses one to be his bride. The first choice is of many according to the command of the king; the second choice is of one, according to the will of the king. . . . The most high King, a King's son, came into this world (which He had himself created) to betroth to himself the wife of his choice, his peculiar wife, a wife worthy of a royal bridal. But because, when He appeared in the form of humility, Judæa thought scorn to receive him, she was cast aside. The servants also of the King, that is the Apostles, were sent through all the world to gather souls and to bring them to the city of the King, that is, to holy Church. . . . Many therefore were called and enter the Church through faith, and there receive the sacraments to be, as it were, unguents and remedies prepared for the restoration and beautifying of their souls. But because it is said by the mouth of truth, Many are called, but few are chosen, not all those who are admitted to this adornment are to be chosen for the kingdom; but those only who so strive to purify and adorn themselves by these means that, when they shall be brought into the King's presence, they shall be found such as He himself will rather choose than reject. Look then how thou art placed, and thou wilt understand what thou shouldest do. Thy Bridegroom has placed thee on the couch where the women are adorned, has given thee various pigments and divers spices, and has commanded thee to be served with royal food from his own table: whatever can conduce to thy health, to thy refreshment, to the renewal of thy beauty and the increase of thy comeliness, He has assigned thee. Beware, therefore, lest thou be found negligent in adorning thyself, lest in thy last day, when thou shalt be displayed in the sight of this Bridegroom, thou shalt (O may it not be so) be found unworthy of his espousal. Prepare thyself as befits the bride of a King, yea the bride of a heavenly King, the bride of an immortal Bridegroom.'

PARABLE XIII.

THE TEN VIRGINS.

MATTHEW XXV. 1–13.

'*Then*'—in that great day of decision, wherein the Lord shall have shown Himself 'a swift witness against the hypocrite and unbeliever' (Matt. xxiv. 51), He shall in other ways also bring the faith of his servants to the final test, and, as they endure or fail under this, shall receive or reject them for ever. '*Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.*' The circumstances of a marriage among the Jews, so far as they furnish the groundwork of this parable, are well known, and have been abundantly illustrated by writers on Jewish antiquities. Use also may be here made of notices gathered by modern travellers in the East; the lapse of centuries having changed little or nothing in that stationary world. That the virgins should be ten in number is not accidental: exactly so many formed, to Jewish notions, a company (Ruth iv. 2); which fewer would have failed to do.[1] These '*took their lamps*,' marriages in the East being celebrated of old, as they are now, invariably at night; hence the constant mention of lamps and torches as borne by the friends and attendants: cf. 2 Esdr. x. 2; and Jer. xxv. 10; Rev. xviii. 23; in both which

[1] Thus it was ruled, that where ten Jews were living in one place there was a congregation, and there a synagogue ought to be built. On the completeness of the number ten, see Vitringa, *De Synagogâ*, p. 232 seq.; and Bähr, *Symbolik d. Mos. Cultus*, vol. i. p. 175.

passages 'the light of a candle,' and 'the voice of the bridegroom and the bride,' are found close to one another.[1] Thus furnished, they '*went forth to meet the bridegroom.*' The order of the bridal procession appears to have been as follows: the bridegroom, accompanied by his friends, 'the children of the bride-chamber' (Matt. ix. 15) 'the friends of the bridegroom' (John iii. 29; see Judg. xiv. 11), went to the house of the bride, and led her with pomp and gladness (1 Macc. ix. 37–39)[2] to his own home, or, where that was too narrow to receive the guests, to some larger apartment provided for the occasion. She was accompanied from her father's house by her youthful friends and companions (Ps. xlv. 15), while other of these, the '*virgins*' of the parable, joined the procession at come convenient point, and entered with the rest of the bridal company into the hall of feasting (Can. iii. 11).[3] Some take rather differently the circumstances which furnish

[1] Among the Greeks and Romans torches were chiefly used: thus Catullus, *Epithal.* 98: 'The torches toss rays of gold;' and again: 'Toss the pine torch with thy hand;' so Apuleius, 10: 'Like ladies going forth to a marriage feast they lighted their path with glittering torches;' and Euripides speaks of 'bridal lamps:' cf. Becker, *Charicles*, vol. ii. p. 465. Among the Jews, lamps fed with oil were more common. Such in earlier Greek would have been λύχνος or ἐλλύχνιον. It is only at a later day that λαμπάς obtained this meaning. At the same time the mention of the oil does not of itself make it impossible that these also were torches; for Elphinstone (*Hist. of India*, vol. i. p. 333) has noted, 'The true Hindu way of lighting up is by torches held by men, who feed the flame with oil from a sort of bottle' [the ἀγγεῖον of this parable] 'constructed for the purpose.'

[2] 'With a great train' (ver. 37).

[3] See Wolf's latest *Journal*, p. 174; and for accounts of earlier travellers, Harmer, Burder, and Hughes (*Travels in Sicily, &c.* vol. ii. p. 20): 'We went to view the nocturnal procession which always accompanies the bridegroom in escorting his betrothed spouse from the paternal roof to that of her future husband. This consisted of nearly one hundred of the first persons in Joannina, with a great crowd of torch-bearers, and a band of music. *After having received the lady* they returned, but were joined by an equal number of ladies, who paid this compliment to the bride.' These last correspond to the virgins here, and do not join the procession till the bridegroom, having received the bride, is escorting her to her new abode.

the machinery of the parable. They suppose these virgins to meet the bridegroom, not as he returns with, but as he goes to fetch, the bride; accompanying him first to her home and only then to his own. But such was not the manner either with the Jews or the Greeks:[1] while the spiritual significance of the parable is seriously disturbed thereby. The virgins we may confidently affirm, '*went forth to meet the bridegroom* and the bride,'—however the last words, found in some earlier Versions, have no right to a place in the text.

But these '*virgins*,' why are they so called, and whom do they represent? There are two mistakes to which the pressing too far the title which they bear has given rise. There is first theirs who argue, All are virgins; all, therefore, belong at the inmost centre of their life unto Christ. Some, it is true, are found unready at the decisive moment, and therefore suffer loss (1 Cor. iii. 13), even a long deferring of their blessedness. Yet the honourable name bestowed alike upon all gives assurance that all are saved in the end, none finally shut out from the kingdom of glory. They who make this milder estimate of the guilt of the foolish virgins, and of the nature of their doom, usually connect with this the doctrine of the thousand years reign of Christ upon earth and a first resurrection; from the blessedness of which these should be shut out for this unreadiness of theirs, whether at the hour of their death, or of the second coming of their Lord. Their imperfections, and the much in them remaining unmortified and unpurified still, will need the long and painful purging of this exclusion, and of the fearful persecutions to which all thus excluded shall be exposed: while yet the root of the matter being in them, they do not forfeit everything, nor finally fall short of the heavenly joy.[2] But the premisses from

[1] See Becker, *Charicles*, vol. ii. p. 468.

[2] Thus Poiret (*Divin. Œconom.* iv. 12, 18, vol. ii. p. 276): 'Those who at the time of the Advent shall be living indeed in a state of grace, but at the same time hampered with many imperfections and many sins of negligence, which so far they have not yet corrected or purged away, these, I say, shall be shut out from the glorious reign of Christ upon

which these conclusions are drawn appear to me nothing worth. There would be something in the fact that unwise as well as wise are here by the Lord styled 'virgins,' if others sometimes undertook the office of welcoming the bridegroom, and He, notwithstanding, had chosen to give the appellation of virgins to these. But seeing that to such the office in the usual order of things appertained, *their* arguments who like Von Meyer,[1] Olshausen, Stier,[2] press to such conclusions as I have just stated the title of virgins which the foolish bear, appear to me to possess no force at all.

Into the second error Chrysostom, with others, has fallen; who, accepting the title of virgins in the literal, while every-

earth during the passing of the thousand years of this period, and shall see the gate fastened against them. They shall thus be left in the outer darkness of expiation, and their bliss shall be deferred until the general resurrection after the accomplishment of the thousand years of the reign of Christ and the saints. And this is clearly enough taught by the parable of the foolish virgins. For we see that by reason of their negligence, these were shut out from the marriage feast, although they were virgins, and had the lamp of faith, and called upon the Lord. For the door once closed was never again opened while this time endured; since the shaking which there is to be in this world before the end cometh of it and of the times, through which also God will work in this world and in all things which are in it this glorious change (which shall be as the door and the introduction into his kingdom), is only to take place once. Yet once, He saith, and I will shake the heaven and the earth; and all who at that time through the perfection of their purity shall be fitted to attain to glory, shall receive the impact of this divine shaking and shall be changed: but after this time until the general resurrection there shall no new shaking or change come to pass. For then shall arrive the day of the resting of nature and of all created things which shall have been introduced into it. Hence the foolish virgins and all who shall have not yet put on the marriage garment will needs wait for eternity itself. For it seems improbable that these careless virgins, in whom there was yet so great a disposition towards good, and they also who at that time were not duly prepared and yet had already made a good beginning, should be doomed to perish eternally: but it is also improbable, however zealously, after the door has once been closed, they may betake themselves to preparation, that Christ will again issue forth from his rest, and for their sakes will institute a new division and special separation in nature.'

[1] *Blätter für höhere Wahrheit*, vol. vii. p. 247.

[2] *Reden Jesu*, vol. ii. p. 581.

thing else is taken in a figurative, sense, limit the application of the parable to those who had made a profession of outward virginity ;[1] instead of seeing that the virginity here is the profession of a pure faith, the absence of spiritual fornication, of apostasy from the one God (Rev. xiv. 4 ; 2 Cor. xi. 2). This all the virgins have ; and in the number of these must be included all who profess to be waiting for the Son of God from heaven, to love his appearing ; all who with their lips join the confession, 'I believe in Jesus Christ our Lord, who shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead,' and who do not in their lives openly deny this hope ; all are included, who would desire to include themselves in the number of his believing people.[2] The whole company of the virgins have this in common, that they confess to the same Lord, and to the same hope in Him,—as is implied in the fact of all alike taking the lamps, and going forth to meet the bridegroom.

That which constitutes a distinction among them first appears in the words that follow. When it is added '*And five of them were wise, and five were foolish*,' the numbers make nothing to the case; only the division is essential. They are not divided into good and bad, but, as the hearers elsewhere (Matt. vii. 25–27), into '*wise*' and '*foolish ;*' for, as a certain degree of good-will toward the truth is assumed

[1] Augustine (*Serm.* xciii. 2) warns against any such limitation of the parable ; which belongs to all souls, 'which have the Catholic faith and appear to have good works in God's Church ;' and elsewhere, 'Virginity of heart, untainted faith.' Jerome (in loc.) : 'They are called virgins because they make their boast in the knowledge of the one God, and their mind is unviolated by the tumult of idolatry.'

[2] Jerome (*Adv. Jovin.* 2) : 'The ten virgins are examples not of the whole human race, but of the careful and the indolent, of whom the one are always looking for the advent of the Lord, the others surrender themselves to sleep and sloth and take no thought for the judgment to come.' Tertullian (*De Animâ*, 18) mentions a strange abuse, which some of the Gnostics made of this parable : The five foolish virgins are the five senses, foolish inasmuch as they are easily deceived, and often give fallacious notices ; while the five wise are the reasonable powers, which have the capacity of apprehending ideas.

there on the part of the '*foolish*,' as evidenced in their willingness to hear, and in the superstructure, however weak, which they raise, so on the part of these in their going forth even with the intention of meeting the bridegroom. They are severally described,—the wise, 2 Pet. i. 5–8, and the foolish, 2 Pet. i. 9. We are next informed wherein consisted the foolishness of these, and the wisdom of those: '*They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps*.' Here is the turning-point of the parable. On a right apprehending of what the having, or the not having, a reserved supply of oil may mean everything must depend. Again we meet with a controversy between Roman Catholics and the early Reformers, and one differing in little from that to which 'the wedding garment' gave occasion (see p. 241). The Reformers asserted that what the foolish virgins lacked was the living principle of faith; that what they had were the outer circumstances of a Christian profession; these were their lamps shining before men; but they wanted the inner spirit of life, the oil which they should have had, if their lamps were to be found burning in the day of Christ's appearing.[1]

[1] This is very much Augustine's interpretation (*Ep.* cxl. 33; *Serm.* cxlix. 11): 'The lamps are good works. . . . and a conversation which even in the eyes of men shines forth as worthy of praise; but it makes the greatest difference with what intention this is practised. . . . What then is the carrying oil with us save the having the consciousness of pleasing God by good works instead of taking for the limit of our joy the praise of men?' Cocceius explains the oil in the vessels thus: 'The teaching of the Holy Spirit continually feeding our faith so that it fail not;' and Cajetan, a Roman Catholic expositor, consents to this interpretation; his words are so excellent that I will quote them: 'They who work good works differ in this that some have the witness of their goodness only without in the good works themselves: for within they have no feeling that they love God with all their heart, that they repent of their sins because these are displeasing to God, that it is for the sake of God that they love their neighbour. But others there are who so work good works that their shining deeds bear witness without of good disposition, and within in the inner consciousness the Holy Spirit himself witnesses to the spirit of their doers that they are the sons of God. These feel in all their heart that they love God, that it is for the sake of

The Roman Catholic reversed the whole; for him what they had was faith, but faith which, not having works, was 'dead, being alone' (Jam. ii. 17); they were not careful to maintain good works, to nourish the lamp of faith, which they carried before men, with deeds of light done for and in the sight of God; they did not by well-doing stir up the grace of God that was in them, and so the unused grace was taken from them; their lamps burned dim, and at last were wholly extinguished, nor had they wherewith to revive them anew.[1]

Here again it is only necessary to call attention to the different senses in which the two contending parties employ the word *faith*,—the Roman Catholics as the outward profession of the truth,—the Reformers as the root and living principle of Christian life.[2] Except for these diverse uses of the same term, the two interpretations would not be opposed to, or exclude one another,—would indeed admit of a fair reconciliation.[3] For we may equally contemplate the foolish virgins, unprovided with oil, as those going through a round of external duties, without life, without love, without any striving after inward conformity to the law of God, whose religion is all husk and no kernel; or, again, as those who, confessing Christ with their lips, and holding fast the form of the truth, are for all this remiss in the work of the Lord, in acts of charity, of humility, and self-denial; and who therefore, by that law of the kingdom of heaven which decrees

God that they repent, for the sake of God that they love their neighbour and God himself, and, in a word, that God is the principle of their love, hope, fear, their joy and sorrow, and briefly of their working both within and without: and this is oil in fitting vessels.'

[1] Thus Jerome (in loc.): 'Those who have no oil are those who seem to confess the Lord with a like faith, but neglect the works of virtue.' Cf. Origen. *in Matth. Tract.* 32.

[2] As Augustine, when he says: 'The soul of thy soul is faith.'

[3] For instance, who would refuse to accede to the explanation given by Gerhard? 'By the lighted lamps we must understand the outward profession of the lip and the outer appearance of piety: by the oil in the vessels, the inner righteousness of the heart, true faith, sincere charity, watchfulness, and prudence, which meet the eyes only of God, not of men.'

that from him who hath not shall be taken even that which he hath, gradually lose that grace which they had, and discover that they have lost it altogether, at the decisive moment when they need to have it in largest measure. It is clear that whatever is merely outward in the Christian profession is the lamp; whatever is inward and spiritual is the oil reserved in the vessels. When we contemplate with St. James (ii. 14–26) the faith as the body, and the works as witnessing for an informing vivifying soul, then the faith is the lamp, the works the oil in the vessels; but when, on the other hand, we contemplate with St. Paul the works as only having a value from the living principle of faith out of which they spring, then the works are the lamp, and the faith the oil which must feed it. Yet in either case, before we have exhausted all the meaning of the oil, we must get beyond both the works and the faith to something higher than either, the informing Spirit of God which prompts the works and quickens the faith, of which Spirit oil is ever in Scripture the standing symbol (Exod. xxx. 22–33; Zech. iv. 2, 12; Acts x. 38; Heb. i. 9; 1 Joh. ii. 20–27).

But under whatever aspect we regard the relation between the oil in the lamps and in the vessels, the purpose of the parable is, as we cannot doubt (see ver. 13), to impress upon all members of the Church their need of vigilance. Regarded in the one view, it is a warning that they be careful to maintain good works, that they be not satisfied, as some, with saying, 'Lord, Lord,' while they do not the things that He says. Regarded under the other aspect, it is a warning that they be watchful over their inward state,—over their affections,—over all which, withdrawn from the eyes of man, is seen only of God;—that they seek to have a constant supply of the Spirit of Christ Jesus in their innermost hearts, to approve themselves before God,[1] as well as to show fairly and unblamably

[1] See Augustine, *Ep.* cxl. 31; *Serm.* xciii. 8; Gregory the Great, *Hom.* 12 *in Evang.*; and the author of a sermon found among the works of St. Bernard (vol. ii. p. 722): 'The oil in the lamp is a good work in its manifestation, but while the charity of the work is beheld by those around

before the world. In either case, we must remember, and it adds much to the solemnity of the lesson, that by the foolish virgins are meant,—not hypocrites, not self-conscious dissemblers, much less openly profane and ungodly,—but the negligent in prayer, the slothful in good works, all whose scheme of a Christian life is laid out rather to satisfy the eyes of men than to please Him who seeth in secret. Nor is it that they are wholly without oil; they have some, but not enough; their lamps, when they first go forth, are burning, otherwise they could not speak of them as on the point of expiring just as the bridegroom is approaching. In fact, the having no oil provided in the vessels is exactly parallel to having no deepness of earth (Matt. xiii. 5); the seed springs up till the sun scorches it; the lamps burn on till their oil is exhausted through the length of the bridegroom's delay. In each case something more is implied than a mere external profession, conscious to itself that it is nothing besides; it is not that there was no faith, but only that *fides temporaria* which could not endure temptation, nor survive delay. *They*,

and they wonder and praise, the heart of the doer is for the most part uplifted and rises elate; he boasts in himself and not in the Lord, and so the light of his lamp is brought to nought; it lacks its appropriate food, and, though shining clearly before men, is darkened before God. Now the prudent virgins, besides the oil which they have in their lamps, store other oil in vessels: since assuredly holy souls while awaiting the coming of their bridegroom, and while daily with the utmost yearning crying unto him, Thy kingdom come, besides these works which shine in the eyes of their neighbours to the glory of God, and are seen, do yet other works in secret, where only the Father sees. Thus is the king's daughter glorious within when her boast is rather from the oil which gleams in the vessels of her conscience, than from that which shines outwardly: she esteems all that is perceived to be lost, and judges nothing to be worthy of reward which gains the favour of men. She, therefore, who prevails, works hiddenly, she seeks secresy, beats heaven with her prayers, and outpours the tears which are the witness of love; this is the glory of the daughter and friend of the king, but it is a glory from within and unseen. This oil the foolish virgins lack, because they only do good works unto the splendour of vain glory and the favour of men. This oil, in which the prudent place their trust, they store in the hidden vessels of their consciences.'

on the other hand, are like the wise virgins, who recognize the possibility that the Bridegroom may tarry long, that the Church may not very soon, perhaps not in their days, enter into its glory; who, therefore, foresee that they may have a long life before them of patience and self-denial, before they shall come to the kingdom, or the kingdom to them; and who therefore rightly judge that it is not a few warm excited feelings which will carry them triumphantly through all this, and enable to endure unto the end; for such are but as a fire among straw, quickly blazing up, and as quickly extinguished. They understand that principles as well as feelings must be engaged in the work, that their first good impulses will carry them but a very little way, unless revived, strengthened, and purified by a continual supply of the Spirit of God. If the bridegroom were to come at once, it might be another thing; but their wisdom is that, since it may very well fare otherwise, they make provision against such a contingency.

'*While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.*' We may number this among the many hints that the time of the Lord's return might possibly be delayed very far beyond the expectation of his first disciples. It was a hint, and no more. Had more been granted, had He said plainly that many centuries should elapse before his return, then the earlier ages of the Church would have been placed at a manifest disadvantage, being deprived of that powerful motive to holiness and diligence which each generation finds in the possibility of his return in their time. It is not that He desires each succeeding generation to believe that in their day He will certainly return; for He does not desire our faith and our practice to be founded on a mistake, as then the faith and practice of all generations save the last would be. But it is a necessary element of the doctrine concerning the second coming of Christ, that it should be *possible* at any time, that none should regard it improbable in theirs.[1] The love, the

[1] Augustine: 'The last day is hidden, that every day may be regarded;' and Tertullian (*De Animâ*, 33): 'That the assiduity of faith

earnest longing of those first Christians made them to assume that coming to be close at hand. In the strength and joy of this faith they lived and suffered; and when they died, the kingdom was indeed come unto them.[1] As a further reason why the Church should not have been acquainted from the first with the precise moment of her Lord's return, it may be added, that it is in itself, no doubt, undetermined. Prophecy is no fatalism,[2] and it has been always open to every age by faith and prayer to hasten that coming, so that St. Peter can speak of the faithful not merely as looking for, but also as *hasting*, the coming of the day of God (2 Pet. iii. 12); with which we may compare Acts iii. 19, 'Repent ye, . . . *that* the times of refreshing may come;' these 'times of refreshing' being identical with 'the times of restitution of all things' (ver. 21), the glorious setting up of the kingdom; the same truth, that the quicker or tardier approach of that day is conditional, being elsewhere declared in clearest terms (2 Pet. iii. 9). We too have learned to pray that it may please God 'to accomplish the number of his elect, and to *hasten* his kingdom.' But while the matter was left by the wisdom of God in this uncertainty, it imported much that after the expectations of the first ages of the Church had failed, those who examined the Scriptures should see plainly there that no pledge had thus been broken, that no prophecy had failed, that what had actually come to pass had been contemplated from the beginning.[3]

may be tested by the uncertainty of expectation, ever looking for the day, yet ever in ignorance, daily fearing what it daily hopes.'

[1] Yet Augustine, claiming a right to dissent from a scheme of prophetic interpretation current in his day, which made the end of the world to be already instant, says very beautifully (*Ep.* cxcix. 5): 'He therefore loves the coming of the Lord not who asserts that it is at hand, or who asserts that it is not at hand, but rather who, whether it be near or far off, awaits it with sincerity of faith, constancy of hope, and fervour of love.'

[2] In Augustine's words, 'I foretold, I did not fix.'

[3] Augustine (*Ep.* cxcix. 5): 'Lest haply when the time at which they had believed He should come had passed by without their beholding him, they should think that all the other promises were deceitful, and should despair of the very reward of their faith.'

The steps by which the virgins fell into deep sleep are marked; first they nodded the head or slumbered, and next they slept profoundly. Some have understood by this sleeping *of all*, a certain unreadiness that will have overtaken the whole Church, a too great acquiescence in the present time and in the present things even among the faithful themselves —though with this difference, that *their* unreadiness will be remediable and easily removed; this removal being actually signified by the trimming and replenishing of their lamps; while that of others will be too profound to be capable of any such remedy.[1] Augustine[2] proposes this interpretation, but only to reject it; for he asks, Why were those wise admitted, unless for the very reason that their love had *not* grown cold? But there is, he goes on to say, a sleep common to all, the sleep of death, which is indicated here. We may fitly prefer this, which is the explanation of nearly all the ancient interpreters, to that which understands by this sleeping the negligences and omissions of even the best Christians. Our Lord would scarcely have given, as it were, this allowance for a certain measure of negligence, seeing that with all the most earnest provocations to watchfulness, there will ever be too much of this. Least of all would He so do in a parable, whose very aim and moral is, that we be always ready, that we be *not* taken unprepared.

And yet by this slumbering and sleeping more may not after all be meant than that all, having taken such measures as they counted needful to enable them to meet the bridegroom as they would wish, securely awaited his approach.[3] For, indeed, the fitnesses of the parable, which demand to be

[1] So Cocceius: 'It signifies the carelessness which amid the rest from persecution came over the Christian Church after the first watch, as it were, of the night;' and Grotius quotes in confirmation Jam. iii. 2; Rom. xiii. 2. Maldonatus gives this explanation in a form popular at the present day: 'I interpret the words to sleep as to cease to think of the Lord's coming.'

[2] *Serm.* xciii. 5; *Ep.* cxl. 32.

[3] Hilary (*Comm. in Matt.* xxvii.) unites this meaning and the preceding: 'The sleep of those that wait is the rest of the faithful, and in the time of penitence the temporal death of all.'

observed, required such a circumstance as this. Had the foolish virgins been in a condition to mark the lapse of time, and the gradual waning of their lamps, they, knowing that they had not wherewith to replenish them, would naturally have bestirred themselves, and that in time to procure a new supply. The fact that they fell asleep, and were only awakened by the cry of the approaching bridal company, gives,—and nothing else would give,—a natural explanation of their utter and irremediable destitution of oil at the moment when it most needed that they should have it in abundance. So, too, if the wise virgins had not slept as well, had they been represented as watching while the others were sleeping, it would have been a failure of love upon their parts, not to rouse their companions, and warn them of the lapse of time and the increasing dimness with which their lamps were burning, while help was still within reach.[1]

So fared it with all, until, '*at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh:*' or rather '*Behold the bridegroom!*' for '*cometh*' has no right to a place in the text; '*go ye out to meet him.*' The cry which at this midnight hour startles the sleepers is either that of the retinue running before, or of the jubilant multitude, who, even till that late hour, had waited for the passing of the procession through the streets, and now welcomed it with these acclamations. Its spiritual signification has been variously given. Most have understood by it the descent of the Lord 'with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God' (1 Thess. iv. 16), when He, the heavenly Bridegroom, shall at length draw nigh, accompanied by the angels, the friends of the bridegroom and leading home his bride, the triumphant Church, and looking to be met and greeted by the members of his Church yet militant on earth, themselves a part of that mystical bride,[2] that so He may bring her to the glorious

[1] Storr, *De Par. Christi*, in his *Opusc. Acad.* vol. i. p. 133.

[2] Augustine (*Quæst.* lxxxiii. qu. 59): 'These virgins together form the one who is called the bride, as though when all Christians run together to the Church they should be spoken of as sons running to

mansion, the house of everlasting joy and gladness which He has prepared for her. Some, however, regard this cry as proceeding from watchers in the Church, such as shall not be altogether lacking in the last times (Isai. lxii. 6); by whom the signs of the times shall have been observed, and who shall proclaim the near advent of the Lord.—And this cry is '*at midnight*.' It was a belief current among the later Jews, that the Messiah would come suddenly at midnight, as their forefathers had gone out from Egypt, and obtained their former deliverance, at that very hour (Exod. xii. 29); from which belief Jerome[1] supposes the apostolic tradition of not dismissing the people on Easter eve till the middle night was past, to have been derived. But it is idle to suppose that midnight is here named for any other reason than because it is a time when deep sleep falls upon men, when therefore such an event as the passage of a bridal company through the streets would be expected the least; and because thus the unlooked-for character of that day of the Lord, which 'cometh as a thief in the night' (1 Thess. v. 2), would be in the liveliest manner set out.[2]

The parable will obtain a wider application if we keep in memory that, while there is one crowning advent of the Lord at the last, He comes no less in all the signal crises of his Church, at each new manifestation of his Spirit; and at each of these, too, there is a separation among those who are called by his name, into wise and foolish, as they are spiritually alive or dead. Thus at Pentecost, when by his Spirit He returned to his Church, He came: the prudent in Israel went in with Him to the feast, the foolish tarried without. Thus, too, He came at the Reformation: those that had oil went in; those that had empty lamps, the form of godliness without

their mother, when she who is called the mother is formed by the gathering together of these very sons' (Rev. xix. 7, 9).

[1] *Comm. in Matt.* in loc.

[2] Augustine (*Serm.* xciii. 6): 'What does at midnight mean? When He is not looked for, when He is in no way believed.' Jerome: 'For suddenly, as though at the dead of night and when all are off their guard, the coming of Christ will resound.'

the power, tarried without. Each of these was an example and a foretaste of that which shall be more signally fulfilled at the end.

'*Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps;*'[1] and in this act of trimming, the foolish discovered to their dismay that theirs was going out, and that they had not wherewith to feed the expiring flame. In a higher sense, every one at the last prepares to give an account of his works, inquires into the foundations of his faith,[2] seriously searches whether his life has been one which will have praise not merely of men, for that he now feels will avail nothing, but also of God. Many put off this proving of the grounds of their hope to the last moment, nay, some manage to defer it, with all its miserable discoveries, beyond the grave, even till the day of judgment;—but further it cannot be deferred. When the Day of Christ comes, it will be impossible for any to remain ignorant any longer of their true state, for that day will be a revelation of the hidden things of men, of things hitherto hidden even from themselves; a flood of light will then pour into all the darkest corners of all hearts, and show every man to himself exactly as he is; so that self-deception will be possible no longer (Prov. xvi. 2; xxi. 2; Rom. ii. 16).

The foolish virgins turn in their extremity of need to their wiser companions, saying '*Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out;*'[3] or rather, as it is more correctly in the

[1] Ward (*View of the Hindoos*, vol. ii. p. 29) describes a marriage-ceremony in India of which he was eye-witness: 'After waiting two or three hours, at length near midnight it was announced, as in the very words of Scripture, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." All the persons employed now lighted their lamps, and ran with them in their hands to fill up their stations in the procession: *some of them had lost their lights, and were unprepared; but it was then too late to seek them;* and the cavalcade moved forward.'

[2] Augustine: 'They prepare to give an account of their works. Cocceius: 'Every man inquired within himself of the firmness of his own faith.'

[3] The hand-lamp naturally was small, and would not contain a supply of oil for many hours. The trimming itself implied two things, an infusion of fresh oil, and removal of whatever had gathered round

margin, '*are going out.*' Had their lamps already '*gone out*' they would have needed not merely to trim and feed them, but must have further asked permission to kindle them anew, of which we hear nothing. The request, with the refusal which it meets,—like the discourse between Abraham and Dives (Luke xvi. 24–31),—can be only the outer clothing of the truth; but of truth how momentous!—no other than this, that we shall look in vain from men for that grace which God only can supply, that we shall be miserably disappointed, if we think thus to borrow in an easy lazy way that which must be *bought*,—won, that is, by earnest prayer and diligent endeavour. And the answer of the wise, '*Not so;*[1] *lest there be not enough for us and you*,' has its lesson also. It tells us that every man must live by his own faith. There is that which one can communicate to another, and make himself the richer; as one who imparts a light to another has not therefore less light, but walks henceforth in the light of two torches instead of one: but there is also that which, being divine, is in its very nature incommunicable from man to man, which can be obtained only from above, which each must obtain for himself. One can indeed point out to another where he is to dig for the precious ore, but after all is said, each one must bring it up for himself, and by labour of his own.

and was clogging the wick. For the last purpose a little instrument often hung by a slender chain from the lamp itself—pointed, for the removing of the snuffs (the putres fungi) from the flame, and with a little hook at the side by which the wick, when need was, might be drawn further out ('And with a needle draws the unmoistened flax,' Virgil, *Moretum*, 11). This instrument is sometimes found still attached to the bronze lamps discovered in sepulchres. See Becker, *Gallus*, vol. ii. p. 205, seq.

[1] The answer in the Greek is strongly elliptical, as in a moment of earnestness and haste. Bengel: 'An abrupt speech, suiting that moment of hurry.' On the spirit of the answer of the wise virgins, as regards themselves, Augustine remarks: 'It was not spoken from despair, but from a sober and religious humility;' and Chrysostom (*De Pœnit. Hom.* 8): 'They acted thus, not from lack of sympathy, but because of the shortness of the time.'

In the reason which the wise virgins give for declining to comply with the others' request, '*lest there be not enough for us and you*,' there lies a witness against works of supererogation, however Roman Catholic expositors may resist the drawing of any such conclusion from it. 'The righteous shall scarcely be saved' (1 Pet. iv. 18).[1] The wise do not imagine that they have anything over, which, as not needing for themselves, they may transfer to others: happy if their own lamps are burning so brightly that they may be themselves allowed to make part of the bridal company, and to enter with them that enter into the joy of the festal chamber.[2] To

[1] Augustine (*Ep.* cxl. 34): 'They beg oil from the wise virgins, but find it not, neither receive it, since these reply that they know not whether they will find sufficient for themselves even that consciousness by which they look for mercy from the Judge. For when the Judge is seated on his throne, who will boast of the purity of his heart, or who will boast that he is clean from sin, unless compassion shall outstrip judgment?'

[2] Tertullian (*De Pudic.* 22) makes good use of this answer of the wise virgins, when opposing the libelli pacis or 'letters of peace,' which the confessors of the African Church in the Decian persecution were wont to give to the lapsed: 'Let it suffice a martyr that he has purged his own sins. It is only the ungrateful or the proud who would scatter to others that which he has dearly obtained. Who can buy off another's death by his own save only the Son of God? . . . Therefore thou who viest with him in remitting offences, if thou thyself hast in nought offended, then indeed suffer for me. But if thou art a sinner, how may the oil of thy little lamp suffice both for thee and for me?'—Gurtler (*Syst. Theol. Proph.* p. 711) quotes a strange story from Melchior Adamus, showing vividly what a witness was once felt to be here against all trusting in man and in the merits of man rather than in God: 'There was, A.D. 1322, exhibited at Eisenach before the Margrave Frederick of Misnia, the mystery concerning the five wise and as many foolish virgins. The wise were St. Mary, St. Catharine, St. Barbara, St. Dorothy, and St. Margaret. To these came the foolish, seeking that they will impart to them of their oil—that is, as the actor explained it, intercede with God for them that they also may be admitted to the marriage—that is, to the kingdom of heaven. What happens? the wise absolutely deny that they can communicate aught. Then a sad spectacle began; the foolish knocked, they wept, they were instant in prayer; but all profited not a jot, they were bidden to depart and buy oil. Which when that prince saw and heard, he is said to have been so

their unhappy companions they give the only counsel that, under the circumstances, is possible, '*But go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.*' They bid them turn to the dispensers of heavenly grace, to those whom God has appointed in the Church as channels of his gifts; or, as some would explain to the prophets and Apostles, that they might learn of them how to revive the work of God in their souls, if yet there should be time. Some take the words as ironical;[1] but how much more consistent with their character whom the wise virgins represent, to see in them a counsel of love, of that love which 'hopeth all things,'—an exhortation to their fellows that they trust not in man, but betake themselves to the source from which effectual grace can alone be obtained, that they seek even at this latest hour to revive the work of grace in their hearts.

What the wise had ventured to hope for themselves is granted. While the others are absent, vainly seeking to repair the negligence of the past, '*the bridegroom came; and they that were ready*,'[2] they whose lamps were burning,

amazed, that he fell into a grievous and dangerous sickness. "What," he exclaimed, "is our Christian faith, if neither Mary nor any other saint can be persuaded to intercede for us?" From this sadness an apoplexy had its rise, of which he died the fourth day after, and was buried at Eisenach.' Compare Carlyle, *Miscellanies*, vol. ii. p. 415.—Within the last few years a copy of the famous Mystery to which such fatal effects are ascribed has been discovered, and has been edited, with introduction, notes, and a translation in modern German, under the title, *Das Grosse Thüringische Mysterium*, Halle, 1855. It is a very grand and solemn composition; and being evidently a Dominican protest against the extravagances of saint-worship and reliance upon saint-intercession, as encouraged by the Franciscans, has a theological no less than a poetical interest. Dr. Neale was preparing a translation of it, at the time of his lamented death. In Cardinal Petra's *Hymnographie de l'Eglise grecque*, Rome, 1867, p. 39, mention is made of a Greek Drama or Mystery Play, called *The Banquet of the Ten Virgins*, by St. Methodius; apparently of very rude construction.

[1] Augustine (*Serm.* xciii. 8): 'This is the answer not of those who advise but of those who ridicule;' and Luther quotes, 'The righteous shall laugh at the death of the wicked.'

[2] In the *Pirke Avoth* there is this comparison: 'This world is like a

having been fed anew from their vessels, '*went in with him to the marriage:*[1] *and the door was shut;*' shut as much for the security and the joy without interruption of those within,[2] as for the exclusion of those without (Gen. vii. 16; Rev. iii. 12). 'What door?' exclaims the author of an ancient homily on this parable: 'that which now is open to those coming from the east and from the west, that they may sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven,—that Door which saith, Him that cometh to Me I will in nowise cast out. Behold how it is now open, which shall then be closed for evermore. Murderers come, and they are admitted,—publicans and harlots come, and they are received,—unclean and adulterers and robbers, and whosoever is of this kind, come, and the open door doth not deny itself to them; for Christ, the Door, is infinite to pardon, reaching beyond every degree and every amount of wickedness. But then what saith He? "*The door is shut.*" No one's penitence,—no one's prayer,—no one's groaning shall any more be admitted. That door is shut, which received Aaron after his idolatry,—which admitted David after his adultery, after his homicide,—which not only did not repel Peter after his threefold denial, but delivered its keys to be guarded by him' (Luke xvi. 26).

'*Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us;*'—not that we are to suppose that they have now obtained oil; but, having sought it in vain, they return entreating that the want of it on their part may be

vestibule, the world to come like a festal couch. Prepare thyself in the vestibule, that thou mayst approach the couch.'

[1] Compare Milton's grand *Sonnet to a Virtuous Young Lady*:

> 'Thy care is fixed, and zealously attends
> To fill thy odorous lamp with deeds of light,
> And hope that reaps not shame. Therefore be sure,
> Thou, when the Bridegroom with his feastful friends
> Passes to bliss at the mid hour of night,
> Hast gained thy entrance, Virgin wise and pure.'

[2] For, in Augustine's beautiful language, the heavenly kingdom is one 'where neither does an enemy enter, nor a friend go forth.'

overlooked: as those suing for mercy, when now the time of judgment has arrived (Prov. i. 28).[1] In the title '*Lord*,' by which they address the bridegroom, they claim to stand in a near and intimate relation to him; as in the '*Lord, lord*,' twice repeated, is an evidence—not, as some say, of their vain confidence—but of the earnestness with which they now seek admission (Gen. xxii. 11; Exod. iii. 4; 1 Sam. iii. 10; Matt. xxvii. 46; Luke viii. 24; x. 41; xiii. 25, 34; xxii. 31; Acts ix. 4); of the misgiving which already possesses them, lest the shut door should refuse to open any more. Even so it proves.[2] All which they hear from within is the sentence of their exclusion: '*He answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not*' (cf. Matt. vii. 23); he does not *know* them, that is, in that sense in which the Good Shepherd *knows* his sheep, and is known of them (John x. 14). Other parallel passages in which exactly the same emphasis is laid on the word are these: Ps. xxxvii. 18; cxliv. 3; Nah. i. 7; Amos iii. 2; Hos. xiii. 5; Matt. xxv. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 19. Such knowledge is of necessity reciprocal, so that Augustine's remark, seeming a slight, is indeed a very profound one, that this '*I know you not*,' is nothing else than, 'Ye know not Me.'[3]

[1] Augustine, *Ep.* cxl. 35.

[2] In them that solemn line must find itself true:

Plena luctu caret fructu sera pœnitentia.

'A tardy repentance is full of sorrow and lacks fruit.'

[3] At Luke xiii. 25–27 the same image of the excluded vainly seeking an entrance reappears, though with important modifications. The master has appointed a set time in the evening by which all his servants shall have returned home. When the hour arrives, he rises up and bars his doors, and those who arrive later cannot persuade him again to open them. Other words of our Lord (Luke xii. 35–38) offer many points of resemblance to this parable, though with differences as well. There too the faithful appear not as virgins, but as servants,—and wait for him, not when He shall *come to*, but when He shall *return from*, the wedding, from the heavenly bridal, the union with the Church in heaven. The warning to a preparedness to meet him clothes itself under images not exactly similar. They must have their loins girt up (cf. Jer. i. 17; 1 Pet. i. 13), and their lights burning—that is, they must be prompt and succinct to wait upon him, and his house must be

The exclusion of the foolish virgins from the marriage feast, if this interpretation be correct, is not temporary; but, so far as our horizon reaches, final. Many regard it in a different light, as who would not gladly do? and the views of some of these have been touched on already; but to me the sterner and severer interpretation alone approves itself as the true (Isai. lxv. 13). On this exclusion of theirs Bengel observes, that there are four classes, which among them will include the whole company of the saved and of the lost. There are those to whom 'an entrance is ministered *abundantly* into the kingdom,' entering as with all sails set into the haven of their rest; those secondly, that are just saved, like shipwrecked mariners who hardly reach the shore. On the other side, there are those who travel plainly on the broad way to destruction, whose sins go before them to judgment; while lastly, there are such as, though they might have seemed not 'far off from the kingdom of God,' yet fall short of it after all. Of this last class were these foolish virgins; and their fate, who were so near a crown and a kingdom, and yet missed them notwithstanding, he observes with truth, must always appear the most miserable of all. Lest that may be our lot, the Lord says to us,—for what He said to his hearers then, He says unto all, to his Church and to every member of it in every age,—'*Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour;*'[1] and while we know not, the only sure way to be ready upon *that* day, is that we be ready upon *every* day: unreadiness upon that day being unreadiness for ever; and this doom of the foolish virgins proclaiming that the work, which should have been the business of a life, can-

bright and beaming with lights; and He must be admitted without delay. Then that which they have prepared for him shall indeed prove to have been prepared for themselves; 'He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and come forth and serve them.' What He did once at the paschal supper (John xiii. 4) shall be only a prophecy of what He shall repeat in a more glorious manner at the marriage-supper of the Lamb.

[1] What is more in this verse should have no place in the text, having probably been transferred from Matt. xxiv. 44.

not be huddled up and accomplished in a moment (Luke xii. 40; xxi. 34–36; 1 Thess. v. 6; 2 Pet. iii. 10; Rev. iii. 3).

A few words on the relation in which this parable stands to that of the Marriage of the King's Son, and to explain the fact that in that the unworthy guest actually obtains admission to the marriage supper (Matt. xxii. 11), and is only from thence cast out, while in this the foolish virgins are not so much as admitted to the feast. It would be easy to say, that this is an accidental difference growing out of the different structure of the two parables; but by such answers everything distinctive in the parables may be explained away: and we treat them with more reverence, when we look for some reason lying more deeply. May it not be that the marriage festivities there are different from the present? In Gerhard's words, 'Those are celebrated during this present life in the Church militant, these at the last day in the Church triumphant. To those even they are admitted who are not adorned with the wedding garment, but to these only they to whom it is granted that they should be arrayed in the fine linen which is the righteousness of saints (Rev. xix. 8); to those men are called by the trumpet of the Gospel, to these by the trumpet of the archangel. To those who enters can again go out from them, or be cast out; who is once introduced to these, never goes out, nor is cast out from them any more: wherefore it is said, "*The door was shut.*"'[1]

[1] In the early and Middle Ages this parable was a favourite subject of Christian Art. We have already seen (p. 264) how mysteries or religious plays were founded upon it; and see Du Méril, *Poésies populaires Latines*, p. 138. Münter (*Sinnbilder d. Alt. Christ.* vol. ii. p. 91) mentions a picture of the five wise virgins in the cemetery of the Church of St. Agnes at Rome, of very early date; and Caumont (*Archit. Relig. au Moyen Age*, p. 345), on the representations of the Last Judgment so often found over the great western door of a cathedral: 'One often finds on the covings of the doors ten statuettes of women, some holding carefully in both hands a cup-shaped lamp, the others carelessly holding with one hand only the same lamp reversed. The sculptor has always been careful to place the wise virgins on the right of Christ, and on the side of the blest; the foolish virgins on his left, on the side of the reprobate.' Compare Didron, *Manuel d'Iconographie Chrétienne*, p. 217, sqq.

PARABLE XIV.

THE TALENTS.

MATTHEW XXV. 14–30.

WHILE the virgins were represented as *waiting* for their Lord, we have here the servants *working* for Him. There the inward spiritual life of the faithful was described, here their external activity. There, by the fate of the foolish virgins, we were warned against negligences and decays in the inner life; here, by the doom of the slothful servant, against indolence in our outward vocation and work. That parable enforced the need of keeping the heart with all diligence; this of putting all diligence also into our outward service, if we would give our account at the last with joy and not with sorrow. Very fitly, therefore, that precedes, and this follows, since the maintenance of the life of God in the heart is the sole condition of a profitable outward activity for the kingdom of God.[1] There is another light in which we may consider severally the virgins and the servants, and the distinction between them; namely, that those represent the more contemplative, these the more active labouring members of the Church. It is true that every member should partake of both, of contemplation and action; so that even when thus regarded, both parables will retain their application to all: but at the same time one element of the Christian life may predominate in one member, the other in another. Each

[1] Or they may be coördinated with one another. Thus Gerhard (*Harm. Evang.* 164): 'The shining lamp is the talent devoted to use; the extinguished lamp is the talent unemployed and hidden away in the earth.'

must endeavour in his own case to adjust these, to give larger development to the one or to the other, according to the gifts which he finds in himself, and the needs which he beholds in others around him.

St. Mark has a briefer recension of this parable (xiii. 34–36), but with important variations, and reminiscences of the Ten Virgins ('lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping,' ver. 36); and blending into one the two parables which with a stricter accuracy St. Matthew keeps apart. St. Luke too has preserved for us a parable, that of the Pounds (xix. 12), having many points of contact with this, yet assuredly not identical with it, as Maldonatus and others would fain have us to believe.[1] That was spoken when Jesus was now drawing near to Jerusalem, but had not yet made his triumphal entry,—this, while He was seated on the Mount of Olives, the third day after his entry into the city. That was addressed to the multitude as well as to his disciples; this to the innermost circle of trusted followers who should carry forward the work which *He* had commenced on the earth. The scope of that, which is the more complex parable, is twofold, and may be thus defined. The multitude, and perhaps many that were following the Lord with true hearts, supposed that He was now about to take his kingdom and to reign (John vi. 15; Acts i. 6). He would make them to understand that any open assumption of his kingdom was yet far distant; that He must go away, and only after a long period return; and that not till then should opposition to his kingdom cease. Meanwhile (and here the two parables run parallel with one another), those who owned allegiance to Him were not indolently to wait the time of his return, but earnestly to set forward his kingdom, each according to the ability given him, confident that He would reward every man's work; in St. Luke's parable this further circumstance appearing, that He at his return would utterly destroy those who had sent after

[1] Their arguments are well disposed of by Gerhard (*Harm. Evang.* 154, ad init.); and no less by C. à Lapide, who says of that other, 'This parable was spoken at another time, with another aim and after another manner.'

Him messages of hate and defiance. The scope of *his* parable then is twofold. It is addressed, in part, to that giddy, light-minded multitude, who were now following Jesus, expecting that He would suffer Himself to be made such a king as they desired; and who, when He refused the royalty which they would have forced upon Him, might, perhaps, turn against Him, and join in the cry, 'Crucify Him.' These are warned that they be not offended though the manifestation of the King and the kingdom should be deferred for long; warned, above all, that they should not be found in the ranks of his foes, whose dreadful doom might tarry long, but would arrive at last. To the disciples also that parable conveys a warning, namely, that the long interval between his going away and his coming again in glory must be no period of sluggish inactivity, but one for the showing of all good fidelity to an absent Lord; which fidelity would by Him be abundantly rewarded, even as sloth and a neglect of his interests would meet also their due recompense of reward.

A modern assailant[1] of the historical accuracy of the record which in the four Gospels we have of our Lord's words and works believes that he detects in that parable of St. Luke, just as in St. Matthew's record of the Marriage of the King's Son (Matt. xxii. 1), a blending together, through loose and floating oral tradition, of heterogeneous materials;—that in fact we have there what should have been two parables, but these joined in one; and this so awkwardly, that the points of juncture are plainly discernible. He urges that 'servants' (ver. 13) and 'citizens' (ver. 14) stand in no relation to one another, that with slightest alterations, verses 12, 14, 15, 27 would form a complete whole, and might be entitled the parable of the Rebellious Citizens; the remaining verses constituting the parable of the Pounds, which would then be free from all admixture of foreign elements.[2] But let it only be

[1] Strauss, *Leben Jesu*, vol. i. p. 675.

[2] Unger, on the same ground of the lack of unity in this parable, had anticipated this objection (*De Par. Jes. Nat.* p. 130): 'When therefore I call to mind the simplicity of the parable as told by Matthew, and the simplicity and unity of all the parables of Christ,

kept in mind, that there were two groups of hearers in different moral conditions and needing different admonishments to whom the Lord addressed the parable of St. Luke, and it will at once be perceived how He divided to all, to his own disciples and to the multitude, according to their several necessities. In St. Luke the parable is more complex, as having a more complex purpose to fulfil. In St. Matthew it is simpler; being addressed to the disciples alone; the parts intended for the multitude would have been superfluous here, and are accordingly not introduced.

I reserve then the parable of the Pounds to be dealt with by itself and in its own place; for the present we have to do with this of the Talents alone; though gladly profiting by those cross lights which this and that mutually throw one upon the other. '*The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.*' It will be well to keep in mind here the relation of masters and *slaves* in antiquity; and not to confound this with that between masters and *servants*, as now existing among us. The master of a household going from home does not leave with his servants,—it would be foreign to all the relations between them,—moneys wherewith to trade in his absence; nor, if he did, could he punish them on his return for neglect of his interests, as the slothful servant is punished here. But slaves in antiquity were often artisans, as was lately the case with serfs in Russia and slaves in America; and paying some fixed yearly tax to their master: or money was committed to them wherewith to trade on his account, or with which to enlarge their business, bringing in to him a share of their profits.[1] Some such arrangement as this we may here assume. The '*man travelling into a far country*' is the Lord Jesus Himself; who, as He had come

Luke seems to me to have here joined on to this simple parable another, similar indeed, but which was put forth on another occasion and in another way.'

[1] See Greswell, *Exp. of the Parables*, vol. v. part ii. p. 27, seq.; and the *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Antt.* s. v. Servus, pp. 867, 873.

from the Father, was about to return to the Father;[1] and who, that his servants might be furnished in his absence, was about to entrust them, and all their successors whose representatives they were, with many excellent gifts. The day of Pentecost was the time when the '*goods*,' that is, spiritual powers and capacities, were by Him most manifestly and most largely communicated to his servants, that they might profit withal (John xvi. 7–10; Ephes. iv. 8–12). Yet not for the first time then. Much the Lord had imparted during his sojourn with them upon earth (John xv. 3), much before his Ascension (John xx. 22); and from that day forth He has been evermore delivering his goods to each successive generation of his servants (1 Cor. xii. 4–11). This being so, the parable is good for all times and for all persons. As primarily addressed to the Apostles, the '*goods*' are those spiritual gifts which they needed; yet since all are called in their measure to edify one another, and are entrusted with gifts, more or few, for which they must render an account, the application of the parable stops not with them, but is rather of universal application. Nor, because it relates first to *spiritual* gifts, has it therefore no relation to other means and opportunities of serving God, as wealth, reputation, abilities, learning; which, though not in themselves spiritual, are yet given to men that they may be turned to spiritual ends,—are capable of being consecrated to his service; for the use or abuse of which the possessors will have therefore to render an account. Our wide use of the word talent in English, growing as it does altogether out of this parable, is a remarkable evidence of the extent to which this conviction has wrought itself into the thoughts and language of men.[2]

[1] *Auct. Oper. Imperf. Hom.* 53: 'About to go to the Father, He speaks of himself as going into a far country, because of his love for the saints whom He was leaving on earth, since really He was rather in a far country when in the world.'

[2] οὗτοι τὰ χρήματ' ἴδια κέκτηνται βροτοί,
τὰ τῶν θεῶν δ' ἔχοντες ἐπιμελούμεθα.
('Not as their own do men possess their goods:
The gods are owners, we but hold and guard.')
Euripides, *Phœnissæ*, 555.

But different men receive these gifts in very different proportions: '*Unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one.*'[1] Not that the talents, as Theophylact explains it, were to each 'according to the measure of his faith and purity,' for the faith which purifies is itself one of the chiefest of these gifts; but he gave '*to every man according to his several ability*,' inasmuch as the natural is the ground upon which the spiritual is superinduced, and grace does not dissolve the groundwork of the individual character, nor abolish all its peculiarities, nor bring all that are subject to it to a common standard (see 1 Cor. xii. 4–31; Ephes. iv. 16). The natural gifts are as the vessel, which may be large or may be small, and which receives according to its capacity (Rom. xii. 6);[2] but which in each case is, or may be, *filled*. We should not therefore think of him who had received the two talents as incompletely furnished by comparison with him who had received five, any more than a small circle is imperfect as compared with a large. Unfitted he might be for so wide a sphere of labour, but altogether as perfectly equipped for that to which he was destined; for 'there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit:' and as the body is not all eye, nor all ear, nor are all in an army captains or commanders,[3] so neither in the Church are all furnished to be leaders and governors. Yet while we speak of natural capacity being as the vessel for receiving the wine of the Spirit, we must not leave out of account, that comparative unfaithfulness, stopping very short of that which would cause

[1] Cajetan: 'God orders all things sweetly in the Church. He burdens no man beyond his strength, and refuses no man a gift fitted to his strength.' On this distribution of the *possibilities* of service, Leo the Great, *De Voc. Omn. Gent.* i. 8, has some excellent remarks. Thus, as he reminds us well, 'it is one thing to work, another to have the ability to work.'

[2] Jerome: 'In delivering the Gospel doctrine Christ gave more to one and less to another, not by way of generosity or economy, but according to the strength of the receiver; like as also the Apostle says of himself that those who could not take solid food he fed with milk.'

[3] See Clement of Rome, 1 *Ep.* § 37, where this comparison at some length is used.

the gift to be quite withdrawn, will narrow the vessel: even as fidelity has the tendency to dilate it; so that one with far inferior natural gifts will often bring in a more abundant return than another with superior powers, who yet does bring in something. Certain broad cases are mentioned in the parable; but they do not exclude other combinations of the talents committed and the talents gained. There may be cases where he of the two, or even of the one talent, as that of James Davies, the Welsh schoolmaster, will have gained five; there will be other where he of the five will have added to them but two.

Having thus committed the talents to his servants, and divided severally unto each according to his powers, the lord '*straightway took his journey.*' In the things earthly the householder's distribution of the gifts naturally and of necessity *precedes* his departure; in the heavenly it is not altogether so; the Ascension, or departure, goes before Pentecost, the chief day of the distribution of gifts; yet the '*straightway*' still remains in force; the interval between them was the smallest, one following hard upon the other, however the order was reversed.

We are next told what the servants did with the talents thus committed to them; how they spent that time, so full of temptations to sloth and indolence, during which their lord was away. '*Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.*' There is this variation between the present parable and St. Luke's, that here the faithful servants multiply their unequal sums in the same proportions; while there they multiply their equal sums in different proportions; all had alike received a pound, but one gained with that pound ten pounds and another five (Luke xix. 16, 18). Two most important truths are thus brought out, as could scarcely have been done if only one parable had been spoken; first by St. Matthew this, that according as we have received will it be required from us; and then by St. Luke this other, that as

men differ in fidelity, in zeal, in labour, so will they differ in the amount of their spiritual gains.—But while two are thus faithful in the things entrusted to them, it is otherwise with the third: '*He that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.*' How apt an image this, for the failing to use divinely imparted gifts, since 'wisdom that is hid, and treasure that is hoarded up, what profit is in them both? Better is he that hideth his folly than a man that hideth his wisdom'[1] (Ecclus. xx. 30, 31). In St. Luke he hides his pound '*in a napkin*;' but that would have been scarcely possible with so large a sum as a talent, which is therefore more fitly said to have been concealed '*in the earth.*'[2]

'*And after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them*' (compare Matt. xviii. 23). In this '*after a long time*' Christ gave another hint (see ver. 5) that his return might not follow so soon on his departure as his disciples were disposed to take for granted. When, however, He does come, it shall be to take account of every man's work. This reckoning is not identical with that of the rich man with the unjust steward (Luke xvi. 2), nor yet of the king with the unmerciful servant (Matt. xviii. 23, 24), for both of those are in this present life, while this is at the close of all. '*And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto*

[1] Compare Shakspeare (*Measure for Measure*, Act i. Sc. 1):

'Heaven doth with us as we with torches do;
Not light them for themselves: for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touched
But to fine issues: nor Nature never lends
The smallest scruple of her excellence,
But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines
Herself the glory of a creditor,
Both thanks and use.'

[2] Jerome (*Ad Damas.*) finds a further distinction between hiding in the earth and in a napkin: 'This talent must not be laid up in a napkin, that is be daintily and slothfully treated; nor must it be buried in the earth, that is be obscured by earthly thoughts.'

me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.' In the joyful coming forward of the two faithful servants, we have an example of 'boldness in the day of judgment.' They had something to show, as Paul was confident he should have, when to his beloved Thessalonian converts he said, 'What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?' (1 Thess. ii. 19; 2 Cor. i. 14; Phil. iv. 1). The faithful servant says here, '*Behold, I have gained*;' in St. Luke, '*Thy pound hath gained*;' thus between them they make up the speech of St. Paul, 'I—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.' And even this, '*I have gained*,' is introduced by that other word, '*thou deliveredst unto me*;'—it is his lord's money which has so multiplied in his hands.[1] In this parable, as has been observed, the gain is according to the talents, five for five, and two for two. Consistently with this, the commendation of the servants is expressed in exactly the same language, even as the reward to each is precisely the same. Each hears the same '*Well done*;' to each it is said, '*Enter thou into the joy of thy lord*;'[2] each, that is, is invited to a fellowship in his lord's joy. The image on which this language rests is that of a festival, with which the master celebrates his return, in the joy of which each of the servants,

[1] Grotius: 'He modestly attributes the gain to his lord's money, not to his own industry.'

[2] Leighton: 'It is but little we can receive here, some drops of joy that enter into *us*; but there *we* shall enter into joy, as vessels put into a sea of happiness.' So Gerhard: 'For so great shall be that joy that it may not be contained in man or be comprehended by him, therefore man enters into that incomprehensible joy, but the joy does not enter into man as if by man comprehended.' H. de Sto. Victore (*Erud. Theol.* 3): 'Joy is threefold, the joy of the world, the joy of thyself, the joy of thy Lord. The first springs from worldly affluence, the second from a good conscience, the third from the experience of eternity. Therefore thou must not go forth into the joy of the world, thou must not abide in thine own joy, but thou must enter into the joy of thy Lord. . . . To the first joy man went forth when he fell from Paradise; to the second he begins to attain when through faith reconciled unto God; but at the third he will only arrive, when by seeing him as He is he shall enjoy him eternally.'

so soon as he has rendered his account, and shown that he has been true to his master's interests in his absence, is bidden freely to share. Under certain circumstances a master's invitation of his slave to sit down with him at table did itself constitute the act of manumission; henceforth he was free.[1] Perhaps there may be here allusion to something of the kind—the incorporation in an act of what once He had spoken in words, 'Henceforth I call you not servants, ... but I have called you friends' (John xv. 15; Luke xii. 37; Rev. iii. 20). It need hardly be observed that since all, when they have done all, are to say of themselves 'We are unprofitable servants' (Luke xvii. 10), in this '*Well done*' there utters itself the indulgence, the ἐπιείκεια, of the Gospel, and not the rigour of the Law.

'*Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard*[2] *man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.*' We can well understand why he should linger to the last, his heart secretly misgiving him, whatever face he may attempt to put on the matter. It is true that he had not wasted his master's goods like the unjust steward (Luke xvi. 1), nor spent all his portion in riotous living like the prodigal (Luke xv. 13), nor was he ten thousand talents in debt like the unmerciful servant (Matt. xviii. 24); and it is an entire mistake to confound his guilt with theirs, from which it should be kept wholly distinct; for so the very persons whose consciences the parable was meant to reach escape its force. When we weave the meshes of the spiritual net so large, all but the biggest offenders contrive to slip through; and the parable is not for gross sinners,

[1] See the *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Antt.* s. v. Manumissio, p. 596.

[2] The σκληρός here is stronger than the αὐστηρός in the parallel passage of St. Luke (xix. 21); see my *Synonyms of the New Testament*, § 14. All English Versions have from the beginning rendered this by 'hard,' on which it would be impossible to improve; but αὐστηρός was 'stern' in Wiclif, 'strait' in the early Reformed Versions, and 'austere' first in the Rheims.

who by their whole lives evidently deny that they count Christ to be their Lord and master at all; who squander their talent, or refuse to acknowledge that they have ever received one. The law and their own hearts tell *them* plainly enough of their sin and danger. But the warning here is for those who *hide* their talent, who, being equipped of God for a sphere of activity in his kingdom, do yet choose, in Lord Bacon's words, 'a goodness solitary and particular, rather than generative and seminal.' Such might only too easily deceive themselves, the temptations being so many to a shrinking from the pains involved in a diligent laying out of this talent. There is a show of humility in the excuses which would palliate this sloth: as for instance, 'The care of my own soul is sufficient to occupy me wholly; the responsibilities of any spiritual work are so awful, that I dare not undertake them; while I am employed about the souls of others, I may perhaps be losing my own.' How often we read in the early Church of some who on pleas like these declined charges to which they were called; and, when they should have been the salt of the earth, thought rather to keep their own saltness by withdrawing from all those active ministries in which they might have served their brethren in love.[1]

Very instructive also is the fact that it is the recipient of

[1] Augustine, preaching on the anniversary of his exaltation to the Episcopate (*Serm.* cccxxxix. 3), uses this parable, speaking of a temptation which he felt to withdraw from active labour in the Church, and to cultivate a solitary piety: 'If I am not trading but am hoarding my money, the Gospel terrifies me. For I might say: Why should I weary men, saying unto the wicked: Be it far from you to act wickedly; act in this way, cease to act in that? Why should I be burdensome to men? I have received how I must live, even as I am commanded, as I am instructed: let me deliver as I have received; why should I give account for others? But the Gospel terrifies me. For with respect to that most tranquil withdrawal from care, no one would convince me: there is nothing better, nothing sweeter, than, without disturbance from any, to contemplate the Divine treasure: it is sweet, it is good. To preach, to reprove, to chide, to build up, to be busied with everyone, is a great burden, a great weight, a great labour. Who would not shun that labour? But the gospel terrifies us.' And again (*In Ev. Joh. Tract.* 10): 'If thou hast become cold, languid, looking only to thyself, sufficing thy-

the one talent who proves the defaulter here. Nothing in the scheme of the parable hindered the attribution of this guilt to him of the five talents, or to him of the ten; for there are only too many of those whom God has gifted the most richly, who altogether fail to turn to his glory the marvellous powers with which He has endowed them. Yet no, it is neither of these; but the servant of the one talent; that so henceforward none may excuse his sloth on a plea like this, 'So little is committed to my charge, that it cannot matter how I administer that little. It is so little that I can do for God, what signifies that little whether it be done or left undone?'[1] Christ will teach us here that it is not the more or the less which has been entrusted, but the fidelity with which this has been administered, which differences now in character, and will difference at the last in doom, one servant from another.

What the root was out of which the sin of this servant grew he himself declares: '*Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man;*'—for this is no excuse framed for the occasion; but a true expression of the aspect in which this servant did really contemplate his lord. The churl accounted him churlish, esteemed him such a one as himself. He did not believe in his lord's forgiving love, and in his gracious acceptance of that work, with all its shortcomings, which was done for him out of a true heart, and with a sincere desire to please him. This was his wilful and guilty ignorance concerning the true character of the master whom he was called to serve. But to know the name or, in other words, the true character of

self, as it were, and saying in thy heart: Why should I care for the sins of others? my own soul suffices for me, let me keep this whole unto God —Does not that servant come to thy mind, who hid his talent and would not trade with it? For was he accursed because he lost it, and not rather because he kept it without gain?' Cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* xcix. 2; *De Fide et Oper.* 17.

[1] Grotius: 'Christ took as his example of negligence the case of him to whom least was entrusted, that no one may hope to be excused from every kind of labour because he has not received any distinguished gifts from God.'

God is to trust in Him; and this knowledge will save from any pusillanimous or slothful shrinking from work for Him. They, indeed, who undertake this are only too well aware that they shall commit manifold mistakes in their service, which they might have avoided, if they had declined that service altogether; that they will be guilty of many shortcomings, fall into many faults in the handling of holy things, which they might escape if they held aloof from these altogether. But shall those competently furnished and evidently called be therefore justified or excused in so doing? would they not, so acting, come under the condemnation of this servant? testify that they deemed of God, as *he* deemed of his master, that He was a hard Lord,—extreme to mark what was amiss,—making no allowances,—never accepting the will for the deed, but ever on the watch to take advantage of the least failure or mistake on the part of his servants?

But this is not all. Proceeding still upon the plan of turning the tables on his lord, and anticipating the accusation which shall be made against himself, by first accusing him—in a speech half cowering and half defiant, a wonderful picture of the sinner's bearing towards God, he scruples not to ascribe to him the character of a harsh and unreasonable despot, who requires the bricks, but refuses the straw (Exod. v. 7), who would reap what others have sown, and gather with the rake, where others have winnowed with the fan,[1] thus unrighteously

[1] This is the meaning of the '*strawed*' in our Version, which does not refer to the orderly strewing of the sower's seed (in that case the same thing would be twice said over), but to the scattering of the chaff from the floor (Matt. iii. 12), that the wheat purged from this might be gathered into the barn. The διασκορπίζειν of the original shows plainly this; it expresses the dispersing, making to fly in every direction, as a pursuer the routed enemy (Luke i. 51; Acts v. 37); as the wolf the sheep (Matt. xxvi. 31); as the prodigal his goods (Luke xv. 13; xvi. 1); or as here, the husbandman the chaff. Thus rightly Schott: 'It expresses the idea of winnowing the corn stored in the threshing floor.'

entering on the fruits of other men's toil. He declares himself thus as much mistaken in the nature of the work, as in the character of the master for whom that work should have been done.[1] In the darkness of his heart he regards the work as something outward, to be done *for* God, not to be wrought *in* Him, or rather, which He would work in and through his servants; as though God called to a labour, and gave no ability for the labour, imposed a task, and put no joy nor consolation into the hearts of them that fulfilled it. No wonder, therefore, that he should go on to say, '*I was afraid and went and hid thy talent in the earth*;'[2] justifying the caution and timidity which he had shown, explaining why he would attempt nothing, and venture upon nothing. He feared to trade on that talent, lest in the necessary risks of business, seeking to gain other he might lose that one, and so enrage his master against himself; even as men might profess to fear to lay themselves out for the winning of other souls, lest, so doing, they might endanger their own.—'*Lo, there thou hast that is thine*.'[3] As it is not denied that he does give back the talent to his lord, how, it may be asked, could this be? how, that is, can God's gifts be hidden, and yet restored to him entire; since the suffering them to lie idle is in fact one form of wasting them? In reality, they could not be so restored. It is only that men imagine they can be thus given back, when they take for granted that keeping the

[1] Aquinas: 'God requires nothing from man save the good which He himself planted in us;' and Augustine putting the same truth in the form of a prayer: 'Give that which Thou biddest, and bid that which Thou wilt.'

[2] Hilary (*Comm. in Matt.* in loc.) in the words, '*I was afraid*,' hears the voice of those resolved to abide, like the Jew, in the law and in the spirit of bondage, shrinking from the liberty and activity of Christian service: 'He says "I feared thee," as though it is through reverence and fear of the ancient precepts that he is abstaining from the use of Gospel freedom.'

[3] Cocceius: 'The proud boast of the preservation of the talent betokens the confidence and security of the man who easily satisfies himself.' See Suicer, *Thes.* s. v. τάλαντον.

negative precepts is all that God requires, that this done they will restore to Him his own.[1]

The lord of the parable is at no pains to dispute or deny the character which this recreant servant has drawn of him, but answers him on his own grounds, making his own mouth to condemn him (Job xv. 6; 2 Sam. i. 16): '*Thou wicked and slothful servant;*'—'*wicked,*' in that he defended himself by calumniating his lord, and '*slothful,*' as all which he had left undone declared;—'*thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers*' (or '*to the bankers,*' as in the Revised Version), '*and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury*;[2] or, seeing that

[1] There is an instructive Eastern tale, which in its deeper meaning runs remarkably parallel to this parable. It is as follows:

'There went a man from home: and to his neighbours twain
He gave, to keep for him, two sacks of golden grain.
Deep in his cellar one the precious charge concealed;
And forth the other went and strewed it in his field.
The man returns at last—asks of the first his sack:
"Here, take it; 'tis the same; thou hast it safely back."
Unharmed it shows without; but when he would explore
His sack's recesses, corn there finds he now no more:
One half of all therein proves rotten and decayed,
Upon the other half have worm and mildew preyed.
The putrid heap to him in ire he doth return:
Then of the other asks, "Where is my sack of corn?"
Who answered, "Come with me, behold how it has sped"—
And took, and showed him fields with waving harvests spread.
Then cheerfully the man laughed out and cried, "This one
Had insight, to make up for the other that had none:
The letter *he* observed, but *thou* the precept's sense:
And thus to thee and me shall profit grow from hence;
In harvest thou shalt fill two sacks of corn for me,
The residue of right remains in full for thee."'

[2] Σὺν τόκῳ, with its 'produce.' So *fenus* is explained by Varro, from '*fetus*, produce, and from a kind of breeding of the begetting and increasing money.' Plato, with the same image, calls the original sum πατήρ and the interest τοῦ πατρὸς ἔκγονοι (*Rep.* ii. 196). To estimate how great the master's gains even so might have been, how largely the original sum might be made 'to sweat its miserly eleven per cent.,' we must keep in mind the high rates of interest paid in antiquity. See the

'usury' is always regarded now as the taking of an unconscionable price for the loan of money, '*with interest*' would be better; and so in the Revised Version we read. 'Be it so, grant that I am all which thou sayest, severe, exacting, harsh; and yet thou oughtest to have done me justice still; and this with little or no peril to thyself thou mightest have done; and obtained for me, if not the larger gains possible through some bolder course, yet some small and certain returns for my moneys.' It is hard to find any distinct spiritual signification for this putting the money to the exchangers—to affirm with confidence whether it has such, or is only introduced to add vivacity to the narrative; as the natural exclamation of an offended master. Olshausen ingeniously explains it: 'Those timid natures which are not suited to independent labour in the kingdom of God, are here counselled at least to attach themselves to other stronger characters, under whose leading they may lay out their gifts for the service of the Church.'[1] Perhaps, without pressing the words quite so

Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Antt. s. v. Interest of Money, p. 523; and Becker (*Charicles*, vol. i. p. 237), who has a graphic account of the τραπεζῖται, the bankers of antiquity.

[1] So Cajetan: 'He means by this that if the servant did not dare to use the gift of God in transactions of much risk, he should yet have used it in transactions in which with a small risk there is yet gain.' Has the saying so often quoted in the early Church as our Lord's, yet nowhere found in the New Testament, Γίνεσθε δόκιμοι (or καλοί, or φρόνιμοι) τραπεζῖται, 'Be ye notable,' good, or prudent, 'money-changers,' its origin here? Many have thought so (see Suicer, s. v. τραπεζίτης); but it is difficult to see why, except for the occurrence here of the word τραπεζῖται. The point of that exhortation is this: Be as experienced money-changers, who readily distinguish good coin from bad, receiving that, but rejecting this. Now there is no comparing of the disciples with money-changers here, and such an exhortation lies wholly aloof from the scope of the parable. The precept would be more easily deduced from 1 Thess. v. 21, 22; even as we find Γίνεσθε δόκιμοι τραπεζῖται sometimes called not a *dominical*, but an *apostolic*, saying, or attributed to St. Paul by name, and by some even inserted before that very passage; so Hänsel (*Theol. Stud. und Krit.* 1836, p. 179, sqq.), who discusses the subject well. Cf. Cotelerius, *Patt. Apostol.* vol. i. p. 249, and *Annott. in Euseb.* Oxford, 1842, vol. i. p. 930.—There being mention of interest here, τραπεζίτης is the fitter word than κολλυβιστής, which, however, rightly finds place at Matt. xxi. 12; Mark xi. 15.

much in detail, we should not err in saying that they mean generally, 'If thou wouldest not do and dare for me in great ventures of faith, yet at all events in humbler paths, in safer and less perilous, thou mightest have shown fidelity, and have preserved me from loss.'[1]

His doom, who had neither on a large scale, nor yet on a small, set forward his master's interests, is now pronounced. It has two aspects: it is first, the forfeiture of the neglected talent; and secondly, the casting of him who possessed that talent, but would not use it, into '*the outer darkness*.' And first, he forfeits what he had, and sees it transferred to another: '*Take therefore the talent from him*'[2]—(we have here an important limitation of Rom. xi. 29), '*and give it unto him which hath ten talents*.' This deprivation, in part the directly *penal*, is in part the *natural*, consequence of his sloth. For there is this analogy between things natural and spiritual, that as a limb, never called into exercise, loses its strength by degrees, its muscles and sinews disappearing, even so the powers which God gives us, unexercised, fade and fail from us: '*From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath*.' And, on the other hand, as the limb is not wasted by strenuous exertion, but rather nerved and strengthened more, so fares it with the gifts of God; they are multiplied by being laid out; a truth we recognize in our proverb, 'Drawn wells are seldom dry;'[3] and thus, *Unto*

[1] Godet here observes: 'The Christian to whom the sweet experience of grace is lacking must be the most anxious of labourers.'

[2] Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* xxxviiii. 4): 'What must they expect who have squandered in luxury, if those who have been slothful in keeping are condemned? The punishment of the embezzler must be gathered from the punishment of the sluggard.'

[3] Exactly so Chrysostom (*De Christi Prec., Con. Anom.* 10): 'As a fountain from which water is continually drawn forth is thereby rather purified, and bubbles up the more, but being staunched fails altogether, so the spiritual gift and word of doctrine, if it be continually drawn forth, and if he who will has liberty to share it, rises up the more, but if restrained by envy and a grudging spirit, diminishes, and at last perishes altogether.' Augustine too (or Cæsarius, as the Benedictine editors affirm, *Augustini Opp.* vol. v. p. 81, *Appendix*) admirably dis-

every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance.' Nor is it merely that the one receives more than before he had, and the other loses what he had. This is not all; but *that very gift* which the one forfeits the other obtains; one is enriched with a talent withdrawn from the other; one takes the crown which another has let go (Rev. iii. 11); even as we see continually one by the ordinance of God stepping into the place and the opportunities which another has neglected, despised, or misused, and so has lost (Gen. xxv. 34; xxvii. 36; xlix. 4, 8; 1 Sam. xvi. 1, 13; 1 Kin. ii. 35; Isai. xxii. 15–25; Acts i. 25, 26; Rom. xi. 11). Neither let us forget that this taking away of the unused talent, which will find its consummation at the day of judgment, is in this present time continually going forward. And herein is mercy, that this is not done all at once, but little by little; so that, till all is withdrawn, all may be recovered. At each successive step in the withdrawal, there is still some warning to hold fast what is left, '*to strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.*' True it is that at each successive stage of this decline the effort required for this is greater, the strength for it less. But to complain of this, is to complain that sin is sin, and brings its penalties with it; and it still remains possible till the last spark is extinguished, to fan that spark again into a flame: the sense of increasing darkness and death being that which may arouse to a consciousness of danger, to the need of an earnest revival of God's work in the soul. But this servant never awoke to the sense of his danger till all was irrevocably lost.

courses on the way in which gifts imparted multiply, and withholden diminish,—making spiritual application of the story of the widow (2 Kin. iv.), whose two sons Elisha redeemed from bondage, by multiplying the oil which she had in her vessel so long as she provided other vessels into which to pour it; that oil, when there were no more of these, stopping at once:—'And the Scripture saith that the oil stopped after she could not find where to put it. So, beloved brethren, charity is ever increasing so long as it finds an object. And therefore we should even of set purpose search for vessels into which we may pour the oil, since we have proved that, while we pour it into others, we have the more. Now the vessels of charity are men.'

And now the sentence of the forfeiture of his unused talent is pronounced;—the forfeiture itself had in some sort taken place already. Nor is this all. It is further said to those that stand by (see Luke xix. 24), '*And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*' (Matt. xiii. 42; xxii. 13). Olshausen would fain distinguish between the '*outer darkness*' of this passage and of Matt. xxii. 13, and 'the furnace of fire' of Matt. xiii. 42, that while the latter is the expression of total and final loss, the former, though punitive, is also remedial. But not to urge other objections against a scheme which has no Scriptural warrant, namely, that for those who have been brought within the sphere of the Gospel, the present dispensation is not decisive, the words which in each case follow, '*There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*,' set the two dooms on the same awful level, however one may have a more dreadful sound than the other.

A comparison of the causes which led to this servant's exclusion, and those which led to the exclusion of the foolish virgins, is full of warning and instruction for all. Those virgins erred through a vain *over*-confidence, this servant through an *under*-confidence, that was equally vain and sinful. They were overbold, he was not bold enough. Thus two wrong aspects under which we might be tempted to regard the service of God, two rocks upon opposite sides on which faith is in danger of making shipwreck, are laid down for us, as in a chart, that we may avoid them both. Those virgins counted it too easy a thing to serve the Lord; this servant counted it too hard. They esteemed it but as the going forth to a festival which should presently begin; he as a hard, dreary, insupportable work for a thankless master. In them we behold the perils which beset the *sanguine*, in him the *melancholic*, complexion. *They* represent a class needing such warnings as this: 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it' (Matt. vii. 14); 'Work out your own salvation

with fear and trembling' (Phil. ii. 12); 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself' (Matt. xvi. 24). *He* is representative of a class which should need to be reminded: 'Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear' (Rom. viii. 15); 'Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest; . . . but ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, . . . and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel' (Heb. xii. 18, 22, 24).

PARABLE XV.

THE SEED GROWING SECRETLY.

MARK iv. 26–29.

THIS parable, the only one peculiar to St. Mark, declares, like that of the Leaven, the secret invisible energy of the divine word,—that this has a life of its own, and will unfold itself according to the laws of its own being; while, besides all which it has in common with that parable, it teaches further, that this divine word has that in it which will allow it to be confidently left to this inherent energy which it possesses.

'*So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.*' It is better to deal with the main difficulty in the parable at once—not so much to wait till it arises, as rather to go to seek it. It is this. Whom shall we understand by the man casting seed in the ground? Is it the Son of man Himself? or is it those who, in subordination to Him, declare the Gospel of the kingdom? Embarrassments attend either explanation. If we say that the Lord is Himself the sower here, how then shall we explain ver. 27? It cannot be affirmed of Him that He '*knoweth not how*' the seed which He Himself has sown springs and grows; since it is only by the continual presence of his Spirit in the hearts of his people that it grows at all; while certainly it is a poor evasion of this difficulty to say with Erasmus, that, '*he knoweth not how*,' ought rather to be '*it*,'—that is, the seed itself,—

'*knoweth not how*.' For who would think of denying this? Neither can He fitly be compared to a sower who, having scattered his seed, goes his way, and occupies himself in other tasks, knowing that it lies beyond the range of his power to do more for the seed; which must live, if it live at all, by its own life; and that his activity will not begin again, till the time of the harvest has come round. This is no fit description of Him, who is not merely 'the author and finisher of our faith,' but conducts it through all intermediate stages, and without whose blessing and active coöperation it could make no growth or progress at all. Shall we, to escape these embarrassments, take the sower here to represent the inferior ministers and messengers of the truth; the purpose of the parable being to teach such, that the word which they bear has a life which is quite independent of him who may have been the instrument of its first communication; even as a child, once born, has a life no longer dependent on theirs from whom it was originally derived? But on this explanation attends another and not slighter difficulty; for at ver. 29 it is said, '*when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he*' (the same clearly who sowed the seed) '*putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come*.' Of whom can it be affirmed, save of the Son of man, 'the lord of the harvest,' that '*He putteth in the sickle*,'—that He gathers the saints, when they are ripe for glory,—when the work of faith has been accomplished in their hearts,—into everlasting habitations? The perplexity then is this,—If we say that Christ intends Himself by the central figure of the parable, then a part is assigned to Him falling short of that which to Him rightly appertains; while if, on the other hand, we take Him to intend those who, in subordination to Himself, are bearers of his word, then higher prerogatives are ascribed than belong rightly to any other than Him.

I can see no perfectly satisfactory way of escape from this perplexity. Some seeking to escape the embarrassments which beset the first explanation, urge the sleeping, and the rising night and day, with the leaving the seed meanwhile to its

own inherent powers of growth, as accidental features not to be pressed, and belonging to the drapery, not to the essential framework, of the parable. Yet this is only an evasion, for clearly in the sower absenting himself after he has committed the seed to the ground, and leaving it to grow without him, the moral of the whole must lie; and to omit this in the interpretation is to leave all without purpose or point.

But without pleading this, I take, as do these interpreters, the sower to represent first, though not exclusively, the Lord Himself. It remains to see how far the acknowledged difficulties are capable of removal or mitigation. This sleeping, and rising night and day, express, as by nearly all is allowed, not the after carefulness with which the sower follows up his sowing, but the absence upon his part of any such after carefulness;[1] as indeed any other explanation runs counter to the whole drift of the parable. He does not think it necessary to keep a continual watch, having once entrusted the seed to the ground, but sleeps securely by night, and by day rises and goes about his ordinary business, leaving with full confidence the seed to itself; which meanwhile '*should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.*' These words present no difficulty, —on the contrary, are full of most important instruction,—so long as we apply them to those who under Christ are sowers of the seed of eternal life. They are here implicitly bidden to have faith in the word which they preach; for it is the seed of God. When it has found place in a heart, they are not to be tormented with anxiety concerning the final issue, as though they were to keep it alive, and that it could only live through them; for this of maintaining its life is God's part and not theirs, and He undertakes to fulfil it (1 Pet. i. 23–25).[2] They

[1] Pole (*Synops.* in loc.): 'When the sowing is accomplished he passes his nights and days at ease, entrusting the crop to God, and not doubting that it will spring up, while himself engaged on other businesses.'

[2] Calvin urges this side of the truth, though an important one, too exclusively: 'He directs this sermon at ministers of the Word, lest they should apply themselves less zealously to their task because the fruit of their labour is not immediately visible. Therefore He sets forth for

are instructed also to rest satisfied that it should grow and spring up without their knowing the exact steps of this growth. Let them not be searching at its roots to see how they have stricken into the soil, nor seek prematurely to anticipate the shooting of the blade, or the forming of the corn in the ear; for the mystery of the life of God in any and in every heart is unsearchable; all attempts to determine that its course shall be exactly this way, or that way, can only work mischief. It has a law, indeed, of orderly development, '*first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear;*' words which suggest a comparison with 1 John ii. 12–14, where in like manner the Apostle distributes the faithful, according to their progress in the spiritual life, into 'little children,' 'young men,' 'and fathers;' but this law is hidden; and the works of God in nature, where He never *exactly* repeats Himself, are not more manifold than are his works in grace. Therefore let the messengers of the Gospel be content that the divine word should grow in a mysterious manner, and one whereof the processes are hidden from themselves; and, the seed once sown and having taken root, let them commit what remains to God, being satisfied that this seed is incorruptible, and that He will bring his own work to perfection. Of course it can be never meant that they are not to follow up the work which has been through their instrumentality commenced; for as, when it is said, '*the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself,*' this excludes not the rain, and sun, and other favourable influences, so neither, when we affirm that the seed of God implanted in any heart has a life of its own, does this imply that it will not require the nourishment suitable for it,—nay, rather it is involved that it will require it. A dead thing would want nothing of the kind; but because it is living, it

their imitation these husbandmen, who cast their seed upon the land in the hope of harvest, are tormented by no anxious disquietude, but go to their rest and rise, that is, are occupied as usual with their daily toil, and refresh themselves with rest at night, until at last in its own time the seed ripens. Therefore, although for a time the seed may be lying buried, yet Christ bids pious teachers to be of good cheer, lest distrust abate their ardour.'

needs whereon it may feed. Still it is a different thing to impart life, and to impart the sustenance of life: this latter the Church has still to do for her children; but then it is in faith that they have a life of their own once given and continually maintained from on high, by which they can assimilate to themselves this spiritual food provided for them, and grow thereby (Ephes. iv. 16). It may excite surprise that instead of the words last quoted, '*the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself*,'[1] we do not rather read, 'the seed groweth and springeth up of itself;' for that, strictly speaking, is the point which the Lord is now urging; and if the earth signifies here, as it must, the heart of man, it is not in it, but in the word which it receives, that the living power resides. But his purpose, in using this language, is pointedly to exclude the agency of the sower, at least a continuous agency on his part of the same kind as he exercises at the first, and this done, He is not careful for more.

It still remains to consider in what sense this leaving of the seed to itself can be attributed to Christ. It is true, Olshausen observes, that the inner spiritual life of men is in no stage of its development without the care and watchful oversight of Him who was its first author: yet there are two moments which, more than any other, are peculiarly his own; one, when the divine life is by Him first implanted in a soul; this is the seed-time; the other, when that soul is ripe for his heavenly kingdom, and He gathers it to Himself; this is the harvest.[2] Between these lies an interval, in which his work

[1] Αὐτομάτη, from αὐτός and the obsolete μάω, desidero, a word of singular fitness and beauty, occurs but once elsewhere in the New Testament (Acts xii. 10: cf. Josh. vi. 5, LXX). It is often used by classic authors to describe the earth's spontaneous bringing forth in the golden age. In the next verse, ἑαυτόν must be supplied after παραδῷ. Virgil (Geor. i. 287) will then have exactly the same idiom:

Multa adeo gelidâ melius *se* nocte *dederunt*.

[2] We may compare Job v. 26: 'Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.' There, however, it is rather said that the favoured of God shall not die till they have known the fulness of earthly blessing, and Abraham's 'good old age.' But in our parable, consistently with the higher dispensation which

is going forward, not indeed without the daily supplies of his Spirit, and the daily orderings of his providence, but without any putting to of his hand so distinct and immediate as at those two cardinal moments. And the difficulty will be slighter, when we make application of all this,—as undoubtedly we ought,—to the growth and progress of the universal Church, and not to that of any single soul alone. The Lord at his first coming in the flesh sowed the word of the kingdom in the world, planted a Church; which having done He withdrew Himself; the heavens received Him till the time of the consummation of all things. Often and often since that day the cry has ascended in his ears, 'Oh, that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down!'—often it has seemed as though his Church were at the last gasp, its enemies about to prevail against and extinguish it for ever, unless He appeared for its deliverance. But for all this He has not come forth; He has left it to surmount its obstacles, not without his mighty help, for He is with it always, yet without his visible interference. He has left the divine seed, the plant which He has planted, to grow on by night and by day, through storm and through sunshine, increasing secretly with the increase of God; and this shall continue, till it has borne and brought to maturity all its appointed fruit. And only then, when the harvest of the world is ripe, when the number of his elect is accomplished, will He again the second time appear, fulfilling that glorious vision beheld by the seer in the Apocalypse: 'And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come

looks to higher blessings, it is rather affirmed that the faithful are not taken away while yet the work of grace is incomplete in them, that in this respect there is a provident love ordering their death as well as their life, that it is only '*when the fruit is brought forth*,' that Christ '*putteth in the sickle*.'

for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.[1] And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth and the earth was reaped' (Rev. xiv. 14–16).

[1] Grotius: 'The meaning seems to me to be clear; namely, that Christ from the accomplishment of the sowing until the time of harvest will not visibly visit the field'

PARABLE XVI.

THE TWO DEBTORS.

LUKE vii. 41–43.

IT may be taken as agreed on by all that the two earlier Evangelists and the last, in their several records of the anointing of Christ by a woman, refer to one and the same event (Matt. xxvi. 7 ; Mark xiv. 3 ; John xii. 3). The question whether St. Luke refers to the same, and the woman in his Gospel, '*which was a sinner*,' be Mary the sister of Lazarus, as then must follow, is more difficult, and has been variously answered from earliest times in the Church. The main arguments for the identity not merely of three, but of all four relations are, first, the name Simon, as that of the giver of the feast on one occasion (Luke vii. 40), and most probably so on the other, for he certainly is the master of the house where it was given (Matt. xxvi. 6) ; secondly, the unlikelihood that the Lord should have been twice honoured in so very unusual a manner ; and thirdly, the further unlikelihood that there should have been twice on the part of some present a misinterpretation of the homage offered, and an offence taken.

To all this it may be fairly replied, that the name Simon was much too common among the Jews for any stress to be laid upon its recurrence.[1] Then, too, the anointing of the feet

[1] Besides these *two*, as I take them, there are nine Simons mentioned in the New Testament : Simon Peter (Matt. iv. 18) ; Simon Zelotes (Luke vi. 15) ; Simon, one of the Lord's brethren (Matt. xiii. 55) ; Simon of Cyrene (Matt. xxvii. 32) ; Simon, father of Judas Iscariot (John vi. 71) ; Simon Magus (Acts viii. 9) ; Simon, Peter's host at Joppa (Acts ix.

with odours or with ointments, though less usual than the anointing of the head, yet was not without precedent;[1] the only remarkable coincidence here being, that Mary the sister of Lazarus, and the woman '*which was a sinner*,' should have each wiped the feet of the Lord with the hairs of the head (Luke vii. 38; John xii. 3). If such had been any merely fantastic honour paid to the Lord, which to offer would scarcely have suggested itself to more persons than one, we might well wonder to find it on two independent occasions repeated. But regard it as an expression of homage, such as would naturally rise out of the deepest and truest feelings of the human heart, and then its repetition is nowise wonderful. And such it is; in the hair is the glory of the woman (1 Cor. xi. 15), long beautiful tresses having evermore been held as her chiefest adornment;[2] while if they in the human person are highest in place and in honour, the feet are lowest in both. What then was this service, but the incorporation in an outward act, of the inward truth, that the highest and chiefest

43); Simeon, for it is the same name, who took the infant Saviour in his arms in the temple (Luke ii. 25); and Simeon called Niger, a prophet at Antioch (Acts xiii. 1).

[1] Thus Curtius, of the Indian monarchs (viii. 9): 'The sandals are taken off and the feet anointed with perfumes;' and Plutarch mentions, but on a peculiar occasion, wine and sweet-smelling essences as so used (Becker, *Charicles*, vol. i. p. 428). Sandals were taken off before meals, which would leave the service of the woman easy and natural to be done. Thus Terence:

> Adcurrunt servi, soccos detrahunt,
> Inde alii festinare, lectos sternere,
> Cœnam apparare.

('The servants run up and pull off the sandals, then others hasten, spread the couches, and make ready the supper.') In ancient bas-reliefs and pictures we constantly see the guests reclining with their feet bare (see the *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Antt.* s. v. Cœna, p. 253).

[2] So the Latin poet: Quod *primum formæ decus est*, cecidere capilli. ('Then fell the hair, of beauty the chief grace.') And of nearly similar uses of the hair in extreme humiliation and deprecation of the divine anger we have abundant examples in profane history. Thus Livy, iii. 7: 'On all sides are prostrate matrons, sweeping the temples with their hair and beseeching the remission of the wrath of heaven.' Cf. Polybius, ix. 6, 3.

of man's honour and glory and beauty are lower and meaner than the lowest that pertains to God; that they only find their true place, when doing service to Him? And what wonder that He, who stirred as none else might ever do, feelings of intensest love and profoundest reverence in a multitude of hearts, should twice have been the object of this honour?—an honour, we may observe, with some differences in the motives which on the one occasion and the other called it forth. In one case, in that of Mary the sister of Lazarus, the immediately impelling motive was intense gratitude. She had found the words of Christ words of eternal life to herself, and He had crowned his gifts by restoring to her a beloved brother from the grave. The pound of ointment 'very costly' was her thank-offering; and as less of shame was mingled in her feelings, she anointed both her Lord's feet and also his head. But what brought this woman with the alabaster box of ointment to Jesus, was an earnest yearning after the forgiveness of her sins; and she, in her deep abasement of soul before Him, presumed not to approach Him nearer than to anoint his feet only, standing the while behind Him. Kissing them with those lips, with which she had so often enticed the simple (Prov. v. 3; vii. 13), and wiping with the hairs of her head, which had been so often nets with which she had entangled souls (1 Pet. iii. 3), she realized, as in an outward act, the bidding of St. Paul, 'As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness' (Rom. vi. 19). And the precious unguent, once poured upon her own person, to enhance the unholy seduction of her charms (Judith x. 3), this she now devotes to the service of her Lord,[1] just as the women of Israel gave the looking-glasses of their vanity to be made into the laver of brass for the tabernacle (Exod. xxxviii. 8). And to the third argument it may be answered, that though the two incidents

[1] Gregory the Great (*Hom.* 33 *in Evang.*): 'She considered what she did, and would not abate aught in what she was doing.' The whole discourse is full of beauty.

have this in common, that in both the act was misinterpreted and some offended, yet beyond this there is no similarity. In the one instance, the Pharisee, the giver of the feast, is offended; in the other, some of the disciples, and mainly Judas: the Pharisee is offended with the Lord, Judas not so much with Him as with the woman; the Pharisee, because the Lord's conduct seems inconsistent with his reputation for holiness, but Judas from a meaner motive of covetousness. To all which we may add, that there is nothing to make probable, that Mary of the happy family circle in Bethany,[1] to whom the Lord bears such honourable testimony (Luke x. 42), had ever been aforetime one to whom the title of '*sinner*,'[2] as it is here meant, could belong; and, as one has well urged, with the risen Lazarus at the table (John xii. 2), even this Pharisee would hardly have jumped so rapidly to his conclusion that his guest was no prophet of God after all.

These arguments appear so convincing, that one is surprised to discover how much opinion has fluctuated from the first, on the relation of these histories one to another,—the Greek fathers generally keeping them apart, while they are identified by the Latin. This last opinion, however, finally prevailed, and was almost universal from the time of Gregory

[1] Σεμνὴ καὶ σπουδαία (serene and serious), as a Greek father entitles her.

[2] '*Which was a sinner*' must then mean 'which *had been* a sinner,' but had long since repented and chosen the better part; even as the history must be here altogether out of its place, for the anointing by Mary immediately preceded the Lord's death, being for his burial (Matt. xxvi. 12). Many do thus understand the words to refer to sins long ago committed, and long ago forsaken; as Grotius, partly moved thereto by the necessities of his *Harmony*, which admits but one anointing, and partly, afraid as he was of the Gospel of the grace of God, by his dread of antinomian tendencies in the other interpretation; this same fear making another expositor affirm, that her sin was no worse than an overfondness for dress. Had the woman, however, long since returned to the paths of holiness, even the Pharisee himself would hardly have taken so ill the gracious reception which she found, or spoken of her as *being*, not as *having been*, a sinner. We should rather with Augustine (*Serm.* 99) consider this as the turning moment of her life: 'She came unto the Lord impure to return pure, she came sick to return healed.'

the Great, who threw all his weight into this scale, until the times of the Reformation. Then, when the Scriptures were again subjected to a more critical examination, the other interpretation gradually became prevalent anew, and had for some while been recognized almost without a dissentient voice, till Schleiermacher not very long ago, and more lately Hengstenberg, have maintained, and both with singular ability,[1] that the anointing happened but once.[2] But to enter further on this debate would be alien to the present purpose: and the passage containing the parable of the Two Debtors will be considered without any reference to the histories in the other Gospels, with which, as I am convinced, it has certain accidental coincidences, but this is all.

Our Lord had been invited by one of the Pharisees, and this was not the only occasion, for see Luke xi. 37, that He would eat with him; He was as prompt to accept the invitation of a Pharisee as of a chief publican, for one needed Him as much as did the other; '*and he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.*' That a woman, and one not better reputed than this woman was, should have pressed into the guest-chamber, uninvited by the master of the house or by the Lord, and should have there been permitted to offer to him the homage which she did, may seem strange;—yet does not require the supposition of something untold to explain it, as that she was related to Simon (Hengstenberg thinks she was his sister-in-law, Simon being for him the husband of Martha), or lived in the same house,—suppositions altogether foreign to the narrative, not to say in contradiction

[1] Hengstenberg has bestowed an immense amount of labour on the endeavour to prove the identity of Mary the sister of Lazarus, and the woman that was a sinner; and also the further identity of Mary Magdalene with these two;—or with this one, as he regards her. To my mind he has failed altogether; but no one knows all which can be said on that side of the question, who has not read his treatise, for it is nothing less (*Evangelium des Johannes*, vol. ii. pp. 198–224), on the matter. It is a singular display of rare, but wasted, ingenuity.

[2] For a good sketch of the controversy see Deyling, *Obss. Sac.* vol. iii. p. 291.

to it. A little acquaintance with the manners of the East, where meals are so public, where ranks are not separated by such rigid barriers as with us, will make us understand how easily all recorded here might have happened;[1] not to say that, even had there been obstacles insuperable to another, or to herself in another state of mind, these would easily have been put aside, or broken through, by an earnestness such as now possessed her; it being the very nature of such an earnestness to break through and despise these barriers, nor ever to ask itself whether, in the world's judgment, it be 'in season,' or 'out of season.'[2]

[1] I quote the following in confirmation: 'At dinner at the Consul's house at Damietta we were much interested in observing a custom of the country. In the room where we were received, besides the divan on which we sat, there were seats all round the walls. Many came in and took their place on those side-seats, uninvited and yet unchallenged. They spoke to those at table on business or the news of the day, and our host spoke freely to them. This made us understand the scene in Simon's house at Bethany, where Jesus sat at supper, and Mary came in and anointed his feet with ointment; and also the scene in the Pharisee's house, where the woman who was a sinner came in uninvited and yet not forbidden, and washed his feet with her tears. We afterwards saw this custom at Jerusalem, and there it was still more fitted to illustrate these incidents. We were sitting round Mr. Nicolayson's table, when first one, and then another stranger opened the door, and came in, taking their seat by the wall. They leant forward and spoke to those at the table.' (*Narrative of a Mission to the Jews from the Church of Scotland in* 1839.)

[2] Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* cxl. 4): 'She, the unchaste, who once had been forward unto fornication, now yet more forward unto health, forced her way into a strange house;' and again (*Serm.* xcix. 1): 'Ye see this notorious woman . . . how she burst in uninvited upon the feast where her physician was sitting, and with pious shamelessness sought out her cure, bursting in unseasonably for the feast, but seasonably for her own aiding;' and Gregory the Great (*Hom.* 33 *in Evang.*): 'Because she perceived the pollution of her foulness, she hastened to the fount of compassion to be washed, and was not abashed before the guests; for because within herself she was sorely abashed before her own self, she thought it nothing that she should be shamed in public;' and another (Bernard, *Opp.* vol. ii. p. 601): 'Thanks be to thee, O most blessed of sinful women; thou hast shown the world a place where sinners may find safety enough, even the feet of Jesus, which spurn no

In the thoughts which passed through the heart of the Pharisee,—displeased that the Lord, so far from repelling, graciously accepted the homage of this suppliant,—the true spirit of a Pharisee betrays itself,[1] unable to raise himself above a ceremonial defilement, or to understand of holiness as standing in aught save the purifying of the flesh.[2] In the conclusion to which he arrives, '*This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is*,' we trace the prevailing belief, that discerning of spirits was one of the notes of a true prophet, above all of the greatest prophet of all, the Messiah,—a belief founded on Isai. xi. 3, 4 (see 1 Kin. xiv. 6; 2 Kin. i. 3; v. 26); nor can it be doubted that such a power of searching hearts is in the New Testament and with a certain emphasis claimed continually for the Lord (Matt. ix. 12; xii. 24; John i. 47–49; ii. 25; iv. 29; vi. 61).[3] The Pharisee in fact mentally put the Lord into this dilemma,—Either He does not know the true character of this woman, in which case He lacks that discernment

man, reject no man, repel no man, but welcome all and receive all. There assuredly the Æthiopian changeth her skin, there the leopard changeth its spots; there only the Pharisee can help casting aside his pride.'

[1] Augustine: 'He had holiness in his body, but not in his heart, and because he had it not in his heart, assuredly that which he had in his body was false.' Cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* c. 5; cxxv. 2; and Gregory the Great (*Hom.* 34 *in Evang.*): 'True justice feels compassion, false justice scorn.'—As a specimen of similar notions of holiness current among the Jews, a commentator on Prov. v. 8 puts this very question: 'To what distance should we draw aloof from a prostitute? Rabbi Chasda answers: To four cubits' (Schoettgen, *Hor. Heb.* vol. i. p. 348). And again, p. 303, various Rabbis are extolled for the precautions which they took to keep lepers at a distance; for example, by flinging stones at them if they approached too near.

[2] Bernard, in a beautiful passage (*De Dedic. Ecc. Serm.* 4), styles him, 'That Pharisee who murmured against the physician engaged in his work of healing, and was angered with the sick woman who was being cured.'

[3] Vitringa (*Obss. Sac.* vol. i. p. 479) has an interesting and instructive essay (*De Signis a Messiâ edendis*) on the expectations of the Jews concerning the miracles which the Messiah was to perform, and by which He should legitimate his pretensions.

of spirits which marks a true prophet; or, if He knows, and yet endures her touch, and is willing to accept homage at such hands, He lacks that holiness which is no less the note of a prophet of God; such therefore in either case He cannot be. As these thoughts passed through his mind, he may have already repented of the superfluous honour he had shown to one, whose pretensions to a mission from God he had in this summary way convinced himself were unfounded.

The Lord shows that He is indeed a discerner of the thoughts of hearts, by reading at once what is passing in *his*. Laying his finger without more ado on the tainted spot which was there, He says, '*Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee.*' The other cannot refuse to hear; nor has he so entirely renounced all faith in the higher character of his guest, but that he still addresses Him with an appellation of respect: '*Master, say on.*' With this leave to speak asked and obtained, the parable is uttered: '*There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.*' In the words themselves there is no difficulty, but in their application one or two will presently claim to be considered. God, it needs not to say, is the creditor, men the debtors (Matt. xviii. 24), and sins the debts (Matt. vi. 12). The sums named, '*five hundred pence*,' and '*fifty*,' vary indeed, but not at all in the same proportion as those in the parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matt. xviii. 24, 28). There one owes ten thousand talents, and another a hundred pence, —an enormous difference, even as the difference is enormous between the sins which a man commits against God, and those which his fellow-man may commit against him; here the difference is immeasurably less, the sums varying only in the proportion of ten to one, for no such incalculable diversity exists between the sins which one man and another commit against God.

'*And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly*

judged.' Our difficulties meet us in the transfer of what is here said, from the natural world to the spiritual. Are we to conclude, as at first might appear, that there is any advantage in having multiplied transgressions; in owing to God a large debt rather than a small; that the wider one has wandered from God, the closer, if brought back at all, he will cleave to Him afterwards? the more sin, the more love? Would it not then follow, 'Let us do evil, that good may come,'—let us sin much now, that hereafter we may love much, avoiding that lukewarmness of affections which will be their condition that have sinned but little? And must we not then conclude, that for a man to have been preserved from gross offences in the time before he was awakened to a deeper religious earnestness,—or, better still, to have grown out of his baptismal root,—this, instead of being a matter of everlasting thanksgiving, would interpose an effectual barrier to any very near and high communion of love with his Saviour? And to understand the passage thus, would it not involve a moral contradiction,—that the more a man has emptied himself of good,—the more he has laid waste all nobler affections and powers,—the deeper his heart has sunk in selfishness and sensuality (for sin is all this), the more capable he will be of the highest and purest love?

But the whole matter is clear, if we contemplate the debt, not as an *objective*, but a *subjective* debt,—not as so many outward transgressions and outbreaks of evil, but as so much conscience of sin; which we know is nowise in proportion to a man's actual and positive violations of God's law. Often they who have least of what the world can call sin, or rather crime (for the world, as such, knows nothing of sin), have the strongest sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, are most conscious of it as a root of bitterness within them, and therefore, as they have most groaned under the evil, are the most thankful for the gift of a Redeemer. But '*he to whom little is forgiven*' is not necessarily one who has sinned little, but one who lacks any strong conviction of the malignity of sin, and of his own share in the universal disease; who

therefore, while he may have no serious objection to God's plan of salvation, nay, a cold respect, as had this Pharisee, for Christ, yet esteems that he could have done as well, or nearly as well, without Him. He loves little, because he has little sense of a deliverance wrought for him; because he never knew what it was to lie under the curse of a broken law, and then by that Saviour to be set free, and brought into the liberty of the children of God.[1]

Simon himself was an example of one who thus loved little, who having little sense of sin, but slightly felt his need of a Redeemer, and therefore loved that Redeemer but little; and he had betrayed this faintness of his love in small yet significant matters. Counting the invitation itself a sufficient honour done to his guest, he had withheld from Him courtesies almost universal in the East; had neither given Him water for the feet (Gen. xviii. 4; Judg. xix. 21; 1 Tim. v. 10), nor offered Him the kiss of peace (Gen. xxxiii. 4; Exod. xviii. 7), nor anointed his head with oil, as was ever the custom at festivals (Ps. xxiii. 5; cxli. 5; Matt. vi. 17). But while *he* had fallen thus short of the customary courtesies, that woman had far exceeded them. He had not poured water on the Saviour's feet; she had washed them, not with water, but with her tears—the blood of her heart,[2] as Augustine calls them, and then wiped them with the hairs of her head; he had not given the single kiss of salutation on the cheek, she had multiplied kisses, and those upon the feet; he had not

[1] Augustine (*Serm.* xcix. 4) freely acknowledges the stress of this difficulty: 'For I am told, if he to whom little is forgiven loves little, but he to whom more is forgiven loves more, and it is better to love more than to love less, then ought we to sin greatly . . . that we may more fully love the remitter of our heavy debts;' and again: 'If I find that he loves more to whom more sins have been forgiven, then was the greatness of his sin to his advantage, yea, the greatness of his iniquity was to his advantage, in avoiding a lukewarm love.' And he solves it as is done above: 'O Pharisee, thou lovest but little because thou deemest that little is forgiven thee; not because but little is forgiven, but because thou thinkest that which is forgiven thee to be but little.' Compare a beautiful sermon by Schleiermacher (*Predigten*, vol. i. p. 524).

[2] 'She poured forth tears, the blood of the heart.'

anointed the head of Jesus with ordinary oil, but she with precious ointment had anointed even his feet.

'*Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.*' An embarrassment, by all acknowledged, lies on the face of these words: first, how to bring them into agreement with the parable, for in that the debtor is said to love much, because forgiven much, and not to be forgiven much, because he loved much; and again, how to bring them into agreement with the general tenor of Scripture, which ever teaches that we love God, because He first loved us,—that faith is the one previous condition of forgiveness, and not love, which is not a condition at all, but a consequence. Some have felt these difficulties so strongly, that in their fear lest the Roman Catholics should draw any support for their *fides formata* from the passage,—which indeed they are willing enough to do,—they have affirmed that the word designating the cause stands for that designating the consequence,—that '*her sins are forgiven, for she loved much*,' means '*her sins are forgiven, therefore she loved much.*'[1] But, in the first place, she did not as yet know her sins to be forgiven,—the absolving words are only spoken in the verse following;—and moreover, this escape from a doctrinal embarrassment, by violence done to the plain words of the text, will find no favour with them who believe that in the interpretation of Scripture, as of any other book grammar, and the laws of human speech, should first be respected; that the doctrine can take care of itself, and will never in the end be found in contradiction with itself. And as regards advantage which Roman Catholic controversialists would fain draw from the passage, such, whatever the explanation, there can be none. The parable stands in the heart of the narrative, an insuperable barrier against such. He who owed the larger debt is not forgiven it as freely as the other is his smaller debt, *because* of the greater love which

[1] They make ὅτι = διό, and very idly appeal to John viii. 44; 1 John iii. 14, in confirmation: see Winer, *Gramm.* § 57, p. 536.

he before felt towards the creditor;[1] but, on the contrary, the sense of a larger debt remitted makes him afterwards love him that remitted it more. Moreover, were it meant that her sins were forgiven, because—in their sense who would make charity justify, and not faith,[2]—she loved much, the other clause in the sentence would necessarily be, '*but he who loveth little, to the same little is forgiven.*'

But the words, '*for she loved much,*' may best be explained by considering what the strong sorrow for sin, and the earnest desire after forgiveness, such as this woman displayed, mean, and from whence they arise. Surely from a deep sense in the sinner's heart, that by his sins he has separated himself from that God who is Love, while yet he cannot do without his love,—from a feeling that the heart must be again permitted

[1] Incredible as it will appear, this is actually the interpretation of Maldonatus (ad loc.): '*Which of them will love him most?*' is only, he affirms, a popular way of saying, 'Which of them *did* love him most?'—which may you conclude from the effect to have had most affection for him, and therefore to have been dearest to him, he to whom he remitted a large debt, or he to whom he only remitted a small?—He claims Euthymius and Augustine as agreeing with him; the latter certainly without right.

[2] I quote here some remarkable words of Coleridge (*Literary Remains*, vol. ii. p. 368), on the attempt thus to substitute charity for faith in the justification of a sinner. 'To many, to myself formerly, it has appeared a mere dispute about words: but it is by no means of so harmless a character; for it tends to give a false direction to our thoughts, by diverting the conscience from the ruined and corrupted state in which we are without Christ. Sin is the disease. What is the remedy?—Charity?—Pshaw! Charity in the large apostolic sense of the term is the health, the state to be obtained by the use of the remedy, not the sovereign balm itself,—faith of grace,—faith in the God-manhood, the cross, the mediation, the perfected righteousness of Jesus, to the utter rejection and abjuration of all righteousness of our own! Faith alone is the restorative. The Romish scheme is preposterous;—it puts the rill before the spring. Faith is the source,—charity, that is, the whole Christian life, is the stream from it. It is quite childish to talk of faith being imperfect without charity; as wisely might you say that a fire, however bright and strong, was imperfect without heat; or that the sun, however cloudless, is imperfect without beams. The true answer would be: It is not faith,—but utter reprobate faithlessness.'

to love Him, again assured of his love towards it, else it will utterly wither and die. Sin unforgiven is felt to be the great hindrance to this; and the desire after forgiveness,—if it be not a mere selfish desire after personal safety, in which case it can be nothing before God,—is the desire for the removal of this hindrance, that so the heart may be free to love and to know itself beloved again. This desire then is itself love at its negative pole; not as yet made positive, for the absolving word of grace can alone make it this. It is the flower of love desiring to bud and bloom, but not venturing to put forth its petals in the chilling atmosphere of God's anger; but which will do this at once, when to the stern winter of his wrath the genial spring of his love succeeds. In this sense that woman '*loved much*.' All that she did attested the intense yearning of her heart after a reconciliation with a God of love, from whom she had separated herself by her sins. All her tears and her services witnessed how much she yearned to be permitted to love Him and to know herself beloved of Him; and on account of this her love, which, in fact, was faith [1] (see ver. 50, '*Thy faith hath saved thee*'), she obtained forgiveness of her sins. This acknowledgment that a life apart from God is not life but death, with the conviction that in God there is fulness of grace and blessing, and that He is willing to impart of this fulness to all who bring the vessels of empty hearts to be filled by Him; this, call it faith or initiatory love, is what alone makes man receptive of any divine gift; and this the Pharisee, in the self-sufficiency of his legal righteousness,[2] had

[1] Very distinctly Theophylact (in loc.): 'Because she loved much, another way of saying, because she showed great faith,' and presently before he calls all which she had been doing for her Saviour, 'signs of faith and love.' Ser Gerhard, *Loc. Theoll.* loc. xvi. 8. 1.

[2] The *Bustan* of the famous Persian poet Saadi (Tholuck, *Blüthensamml. aus d. Morgenl. Mystik*, p. 251) has a story which sounds like an echo of this evangelical history. Jesus, while on earth, was once entertained in the cell of a dervisch of eminent reputation for sanctity. In the same city dwelt a youth sunk in every sin, 'whose heart was so black that Satan himself shrunk back from it in horror;' he, appearing before the cell of the monk, as smitten by the very presence of the Divine prophet, began to lament deeply the wickedness of his life past, and shedding

scarcely at all; he therefore deriving little or no profit from that nearness to Christ into which by God's gracious providence he was brought. But that woman had it in large measure; she therefore bore away the choicest and best blessing which the Son of God had to bestow; to her those words of joy were spoken, '*Thy sins are forgiven*' (cf. Luke v. 20). Many were offended; '*they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?*' offended as others before at a similar bestowal of pardon had been (Matt. ix. 2, 3; Mark ii. 7), yet not venturing openly to utter their displeasure; He meanwhile, not disconcerted by these murmurs of theirs, but implicitly reasserting his claim to forgive sins, followed up one word of grace and power by another, '*Thy faith hath saved thee* (cf. Mark x. 52; Matt. ix. 29); *go in peace*;' and thus in her it was fulfilled, that 'where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.'

abundant tears, to implore pardon and grace. The monk indignantly interrupted him, demanding how he dared to appear in his presence and in that of God's holy prophet; assured him that for him there was no forgiveness; and in proof how inexorably he considered his lot was fixed for hell, exclaimed, 'My God, grant me but one thing, that I may stand far from this man on the judgment-day.' On this Jesus spoke: 'It shall be even so: the prayer of both is granted. This sinner has sought mercy and grace, and has not sought them in vain,—his sins are forgiven,—his place shall be in Paradise at the last day. But this monk has prayed that he may never stand near this sinner,—his prayer too is granted,—hell shall be his place, for there this sinner shall never come.'

PARABLE XVII.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

LUKE x. 30-37.

WE need not ascribe to the lawyer who '*stood up*' and proposed to our Lord the question out of which this parable grew, any malicious intention; least of all that deep malignity which moved some other questioners, who were in fact laying snares for his life (John viii. 6; Matt. xxii. 16). The question itself, '*What shall I do to inherit eternal life?*' was not an ensnaring one: of another who put the same we are assured that Jesus loved him (Mark x. 21); it was not, like that of the tribute-money (Matt. xxii. 17), one which it might be hoped would compromise the answerer, whatever reply He made. Neither was the spirit which dictated the question captious or mocking. This much we confidently gather from the earnestness of the Lord's reply; who was not wont to answer mere cavillers or despisers so. It is true that this scribe or lawyer (Matt. xxii. 35, compared with Mark xii. 28, shows the identity of the two) put his question to Christ, '*tempting Him.*' But exactly the same is affirmed of another lawyer (Matt. xxii. 35); who could have tempted with no ill intention, seeing that Christ bears testimony to him, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God' (Mark xii. 34). For indeed 'to tempt' means properly no more than to make trial of; and whether the tempting be honourable or the contrary, is determined by the motive out of which it springs. Thus God 'tempts' man, putting him to wholesome proof, revealing to him secrets of his own heart, to which else even he himself might have

remained a stranger to the end (Jam. i. 12); He 'tempts' man, to bring out his good and to strengthen it (Gen. xxii. 1; Heb. xi. 17); to show him his evil, that he, made aware of this, may strive against and overcome it,—to humble him, and to do him good in his latter end (Deut. viii. 3, 16). Only he who bears the Tempter's name (Matt. iv. 3), a name which he has earned too well (Gen. iii. 1–5), 'tempts' with the single purpose of irritating, calling out, and strengthening man's evil.[1] If the intention of this lawyer is not that high and holy one, as little is it this malignant and devilish. Rather we may suppose that the fame of this young Galilæan teacher has reached his ears; and he will now take his measure; and counts that he cannot do this more effectually than by proposing to Him the question of questions, '*What shall I do to inherit eternal life?*'

Our Lord answers question with question: '*What is written in the law? how readest thou?*'—as much as to say, 'What need of inquiring further? Is not the answer to thy question contained in that very law of which thou professest thyself a searcher and expounder?' The lawyer shows himself not altogether unworthy of the name he bears; for in answer to this appeal he quotes rightly Deut. vi. 5, in connexion with Lev. xix. 18, as containing the quintessence of the law. That he should thus lay his finger at once on 'the great commandment,' by the Lord Himself accepted as such (Matt. xxii. 36; Mark xii. 30), showed no little spiritual discernment. His words are right words, however he may be ignorant of their

[1] Πειράζειν = πεῖραν λαμβάνειν. Augustine defines often the manner in which it is lawful to affirm that God tempts; thus (*Enarr. in Ps.* lv. 1): 'Every temptation is a trial, and the issue of every trial has its fruit. For whereas a man is generally but little known even to himself, he knows not what he can bear and what he cannot, and sometimes presumes that he can bear what he cannot and sometimes despairs of being able to bear what he can. Temptation comes as a kind of question, and the man is discovered of himself, for to himself he was a secret, but he was not a secret to his maker.' Cf. Tertullian, *De Orat.* 8. On the difference between πειράζειν and δοκιμάζειν see my *Synonyms of the New Testament*, § 74.

full import, of all which they involve; and the Lord declares as much: '*Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.*' Let this which he knows express itself in his life, and all will be well. His conscience is touched at last; he feels himself put on his defence, and it is, as the Evangelist declares, out of a desire to clear himself that his next question proceeds: '*But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?*' He may not have been large and free in the exercise of love towards his fellow-men; but then how few had claims upon him, and how difficult it was to determine which were these. '*Who is my neighbour?*'[1] The very question, like Peter's 'How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him' (Matt. xviii. 21)? was not merely one capable of receiving a wrong answer, but did itself involve a wrong condition of mind, from whence alone it could have sprung. He who inquired, '*Who is my neighbour?*' who wished the entire extent of his obligation to others to be declared to him beforehand, showed in this how little he understood of that love, whose essence is that it owns no limit except its own inability to proceed further, receives a law from itself alone, being a debt which they who are ever paying, are best contented still to owe (Rom. xiii. 8).

What he needed who could propose such a question as this, was, that his eye should be taken off from those, the more or fewer, towards whom, as he conceived, love should be shown, and turned inward upon him who should show the love; and this which he needed the Lord in his infinite wisdom and grace provided for him in the parable which follows. Without

[1] It is instructive to see the question of the narrow-hearted lawyer, 'Who is my neighbour?' reappearing in one with whom we might think that he had little in common. I make this extract from Emerson's *Essays* (*Ess.* 2): 'Do not tell me, as a good man did to-day, of my obligation to put all poor men into good situations. Are they *my* poor? I tell thee, thou foolish philanthropist, that I grudge the dollar, the dime, the cent, I give *to such men as do not belong to me, and to whom I do not belong.* There is a class of persons to whom by all spiritual affinity I am bought and sold: for them I will go to prison, if need be; but your miscellaneous popular charities, &c.'

further preface He begins: '*A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho.*' We are not expressly told that this '*certain man*' was a Jew; but doubtless we were intended to regard the traveller between Jerusalem and Jericho as such; though here and there an expositor denies this, and will see in him a heathen, much to the weakening of the lesson which the parable is meant to convey. He '*went*' or '*was going down*,' not merely because Jerusalem stood considerably higher than Jericho,—the latter lying nearly six hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean sea, so that the language has its fitness in this respect,—but because the going to Jerusalem, as to the metropolis, was always regarded as a going *up* (Acts xviii. 22). The distance between the two cities was about a hundred and fifty stadia,—the road lying through a desolate and rocky region, 'the wilderness that goeth up from Jericho' (Deut. xxxiv. 3; Josh. xvi. 1). The plain of Jericho, an oasis in the wilderness, was of rare fertility and beauty, the Tempe of Judæa, well watered, and abounding in palms ('the city of palm-trees,' Deut. xxxiv. 3; Judg. i. 16; 2 Chron. xxviii. 15), in roses, in balsam, in honey, and in all the choicest productions of Palestine.[1] The squalid village of Riha marks now the spot where once this glorious city stood.[2] On his way he '*fell among thieves*,' or rather '*among robbers*;'—but at the time when the Authorized Translation was made, there was no strongly-marked distinction between the words;[3]—violent and bloody men, who '*stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.*'

[1] Josephus, *B. J.* iv. 8. 3. Cotovicus, *Itiner.*, quoted by Winer (*Realwörterbuch*, s. v. Jericho): 'The extensive plain in which it lies is surrounded by mountains in the form of an amphitheatre, is very pleasant and fertile, and though at present uncultivated, abounds with flowers and sweet-smelling herbs.' Compare Strabo, xvi. 2, ad finem; Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 299; and Keim, *Jesu von Nazara*, vol. iii. p. 17.

[2] Ritter, *Comparative Geography of Palestine*, vol. iii. pp. 18–36, brings together all of most important which modern travellers have written concerning Jericho.

[3] See my *Synonyms of the New Testament*, § 44.

The mention of stripping first and wounding afterwards may seem to reverse the natural order in the succession of events; but is indeed exactly what would happen. The murderous banditti will not injure the raiment which shall be a part, probably an important part, of the spoil by gashes, or stain it with the blood of their victim.[1] The incident is drawn from the life. Josephus more than once mentions the extent to which Palestine in those later days was infested with banditti;[2] and from St. Jerome we learn that the road leading from one of these cities to the other was at one place called the Red or the Bloody Way,[3] from the blood which had been there shed; that in his own time there was in this wilderness a fort with a Roman garrison, for the protection of travellers. Nor has the danger now ceased; Arabs of the wilderness,[4] having their lurking places in the deep caves of the rocks, now as of old infest the road, making it unsafe even for the vast host of pilgrims to descend to the Jordan without the protection of a Turkish guard.[5]

As the poor traveller lay bleeding in the road, '*by chance there came down a certain priest that way*;'—'*by coincidence*,' we might say, by that wonderful falling-in of one event with another, which often seems chance to us, being indeed the mysterious weaving-in, by a higher hand, of the threads of different men's lives into one common woof. That hand brings the negative pole of one man's need into relation with

[1] There is a noticeable story in Lamartine's *Travels in the Holy Land* of one who being enticed to a solitary place, and there bidden to strip to the end that, this done, his life might be taken, turned the tables on his intending murderer.

[2] *Antt* xx. 6. 1; *B. J.* xi. 12. 5.

[3] *Onomast.* s. v. Adommim. But it bore this name already in Joshua's time, Josh. xv. 7: xviii. 17. There is an impressive description of this dreary route in Lamartine, *Travels in the Holy Land*; and in Keim, *Jesu von Nazara*, vol. iii. p. 59.

[4] Jerome (*In Jerem.* iii. 2): 'The Arabs. . . . a race much given to robberies, which to this day infests the borders of Palestine, and besets the path of those descending from Jerusalem to Jericho.'

[5] Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 416; compare Josephus, *B. J.* iv. 8. 3.

the positive of another man's power to help, one man's emptiness into relation with another's fulness. Many of our summonses to acts of love are of this kind, and they are those, perhaps, which we are most in danger of missing, through a failing to see in them this ordering of God. At all events he who '*came down that way*' missed *his* opportunity—a priest, perhaps one of those residing at Jericho, which was a great station of the priests and other functionaries of the temple, and now on his way to Jerusalem, there to execute his office 'in the order of his course' (Luke i. 8); or who, having accomplished his turn of service, was now journeying home. But whether thus or not, he was one who had never learnt what that meant, 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice;' who, whatever duties he might have been careful in fulfilling, had 'omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith;' for '*when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite*,' but with aggravation in his cruelty; for he, '*when he was at the place, came and looked on him*,' and having seen the miserable condition of the wounded man, claiming as it did instant help—for the life that remained was fast ebbing through his open gashes—he too '*passed by on the other side*.' Tacitus, while he paints in darkest colours the unsocial character of the Jews, must yet admit this much to their honour, that, however unfriendly to all others, they were prompt to show pity among themselves;[1] but even this redeeming grace is wanting here; they on whose part it is wanting being the express guardians and interpreters of a law so careful in urging the duties of humanity, that it twice said, 'Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again' (Deut. xxii. 4; Exod. xxiii. 5). Here not a brother's ox or his ass, but a brother himself, was lying in his blood, and they hid themselves from him (Isai. lviii. 7).

No doubt they did, in some way or other, justify their neglect to their own consciences; made excuses to themselves:

[1] *Hist.* v. 5: 'Among themselves their compassion is ever ready.'

as that where one outrage had happened, there was danger of another,—that the robbers could not be far distant, and might return at any moment,—or that the sufferer was beyond all human help,—or that one found near him might himself be accused as his murderer. The priest, we may imagine, said he could not tarry; the service of the temple must not wait, must not be left incomplete during his absence. Why too should he undertake a perilous office? Was not the Levite close behind, to whom such ministries of help would more naturally appertain, and by whom his lack of service, service which the circumstances of the case rendered it impossible that he should render, would inevitably be supplied? And then the Levite in his turn may have thought with himself, that there could be no obligation on him to thrust himself on a danger from which the priest had just shrunk; duty it could not be, else that other would never have omitted it. Such action on his part would be a kind of affront to his superior, an implicit charging of him with inhumanity and hardness of heart. And so, falling back on these or similar pleas, they left their fellow-countryman to perish.

'*But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was.*' This man was exposed to exactly the same perils as those who went before him; moreover it was no fellow-countryman who demanded his help; one rather of an alien and hostile race; but he neither took counsel of selfish fears, nor steeled his heart against all pity with the thought that the wounded and bleeding man was a Jew, whom he as a Samaritan was bound to detest; but when he saw him, '*he had compassion on him.*' This, as the best thing which he gave or had to give, is mentioned first; the rest will follow.[1] While the priest and Levite, boasting themselves the ministers of the God of all pity and compassion, neglected the commonest duties of humanity, it was left to the excommuni-

[1] Gregory the Great says beautifully on this (*Moral.* xx. 36): 'For in supplying him with things more external, he bestowed something that was outside himself. But since he granted his neighbour his tears and his compassion, he gave him also something from within himself.'

cated Samaritan, whose very name was a bye-word of scorn among the Jews, and synonymous with heretic (John viii. 48), to show what love was; and this toward one of an alien stock;[1] one of a people who would have no dealings with his

[1] Our Lord calls the Samaritan a 'stranger' (ἀλλογενής, Luke xvii. 18), one of a different stock; ἀλλοεθνεῖς Josephus tells us they were wont to style themselves, when in the evil times of the Jews they wished to disclaim all relationship, and such he evidently accounts them (*Antt.* ix. 14. 3; xi. 8. 6). The notion of the Samaritans as a *mingled* people, composed of two elements, one heathen and one Jewish, has of late found its way not merely into popular but into learned books; so that they are often spoken of as, in a great measure, the lateı representatives of the ten tribes. The mistake is quite recent. In Christian antiquity they were always regarded as a people of unmingled heathen blood (see testimonies in Suicer, *Thes.* s. v. Σαμαρείτης, to which may be added Theophylact on Luke xvii. 15, Ἀσσύριοι γὰρ οἱ Σαμαρεῖται); so too by the expositors of two hundred years ago. Hammond describes the Samaritan in our parable as 'being of an Assyrian extraction;' and Maldonatus: Samaritani origine Chaldæi erant; see Reland, *De Samaritanis.* For the opinion of Makrizi, the very accurate and learned Arabian geographer, see S. de Sacy, *Chrest. Arabe*, vol. ii. p. 177; and Robinson says (*Biblical Researches*), 'The physiognomy of those we saw was not Jewish.' At 2 Kin. xvii., where the deportation of Israel is related, there is not a word suggesting that any were left, or that there afterwards was any blending of the Cuthites and other Assyrian colonists brought in, with a remnant of the Israelites whom they found in the land. It is true that when Judah was carried away captive, many of the poorer sort were allowed to remain (2 Kin. xxv. 12); and Winer (*Realwörterbuch*, s. v. Samaritaner) thinks it very unlikely that some out of the ten tribes were not left behind in like manner. But at 2 Kin. xxi. 13 the Lord threatening Judah says, 'I will stretch over Jerusalem *the line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab;* and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, and turneth it upside down.' This, only a threat against Judah, in part averted by repentance, had actually been executed against Samaria (2 Kin. xvii. 6, 23, 24; Jer. vii. 15; Josephus, *Antt.* ix. 14. 1). With Oriental conquerors it was no uncommon thing thus thoroughly to clear a conquered territory of all its inhabitants; σαγηνεύειν the actual process was called (Herodotus, iii. 149; vi. 31). If the Samaritans had owned any Jewish blood, they would certainly have urged this, as mightily strengthening their claim to be allowed to take part with the returned Jewish exiles, in the rebuilding of the temple; but their words practically exclude this: 'We seek your God as ye do, and we do sacrifice unto Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither' (Ezra iv. 2). When our Lord, at the first sending out of

people, who anathematized them; even as, no doubt, all the influences which had surrounded him from his youth would have led him, as far as he yielded to them, to repay insult with insult, and hate with hate. For if the Jew called the Samaritan a Cuthite,—a proselyte of the lions (2 Kin. xvii. 24, 25, 30),—an idolater worshipping the image of a dove,—if he cursed him publicly in his synagogue,—prayed that he might have no portion in the resurrection of life, and by refusing under any conditions to admit him as a proselyte, did his best to secure the fulfilment of this prayer,—proclaimed that his testimony was naught and might not be received,—that he who entertained a Samaritan in his house was laying up judgment for his children,—that to eat a morsel of his food was as the eating of swine's flesh,—and would rather suffer any need than be beholden to him for the smallest office of charity,—if he set it as an object of desire that he might never so much as *see* a Cuthite; the Samaritan was not behindhand in cursing, and as little in active demonstrations of enmity and ill-will. We have proofs of this in the Gospels (John iv. 9; Luke ix. 53), and from other sources more examples of their spite may be gathered. For example, the Jews of Palestine being in the habit of communicating the exact time of the Easter moon to those of the Babylonian Captivity, by fires kindled first on the Mount of Olives, and then taken up from mountain top to mountain top, a line of fiery telegraphs which reached at length along the mountain ridge of Auranitis to the banks of the Euphrates, the Samaritans would give the signal on the night preceding the right one, so to perplex and mislead.[1] And Josephus mentions

his Apostles, said, 'Into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not' (Matt. x. 5), He was not, as some tell us, yielding to popular prejudice, but gave the prohibition because, till the Gospel had been first offered 'to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,' Samaritans had no more claim to it than any other heathen. See a valuable article, 'Samaria,' in the *Dictionary of the Bible*.

[1] This, according to Makrizi (S. de Sacy, *Chrest. Arabe*, vol. ii. p. 159), first put the Jews on calculating for themselves the moment of the new moon. Cf. Schoettgen, *Hor. Heb.* vol. i. p. 344.

that they sometimes proceeded much further than merely to refuse hospitality to the Jews who were going up to the feasts of Jerusalem; they fell upon and murdered many of them;[1] and once, most horrible profanation of all (see 2 Kin. xxiii. 13, 14; Matt. xxiii. 27; Luke xi. 44; Num. xix. 16; Ezek. xxxix. 15), a Samaritan entering Jerusalem secretly, polluted the whole temple by scattering in it human bones.[2]

But the heart of this Samaritan was not hardened; though so many influences must have been at work to steel it against the distresses of a Jew; though he must have known that any Jew who was faithful to the precepts of the Jewish schools would not merely have left, but have made it a point of conscience to leave, him in his blood, would have counted that he was doing a righteous act therein. All the details of his tender care toward the poor stranger, of whom he knew nothing, save that he belonged to a nation the most bitterly hostile to his own, are given with a touching minuteness. He '*bound up his wounds*,' no doubt with strips torn from his own garments, '*pouring in oil and wine*,' wine to cleanse them, and oil to assuage their smart and to bring gently their sides together (Isa. i. 6), these two being costly and highly esteemed remedies in all the East.[3] No little time must have been thus consumed, and this when there was every motive for haste. Having thus ministered to the wounded man's most urgent needs, and revived in him the dying spark of life, he '*set him on his own beast*' (cf. 2 Chron. xxviii. 15), himself pacing on foot; '*and brought him to an inn*,'[4] we may suppose that at Bachurim. Neither did he then commit him to the care of strangers, so long as he could himself tend him; but there, as counting nothing done, while anything remained for him to do, '*took care of him*,' tended him as

[1] *Antt.* xx. 6. 1.

[2] *Antt.* xviii. 2. 2; *B. J.* ii. 12. 3.

[3] Pliny, *H. N.* xxxi. 47.

[4] Πανδοχεῖον (cf. ὑποδοχεῖον, Strabo), not altogether identical with κατάλυμα (Luke ii. 7); though both are translated by the same word. This has a host, is something of an inn in our sense of the word; that more the Eastern caravanserai, where every one shifts for himself. See the *Dict. of the Bible*, s. v. Inn.

his state required. Nor even so did he account that he had paid the whole debt of love, but with considerate foresight provided for the further wants of the sufferer: '*And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more,*[1] *when I come again, I*[2] *will repay thee.*' The sum sounds small, though larger than it sounds; but we may assume that he was journeying on some needful business to Jerusalem, and that a day or two would bring him back.

Beautiful as is this parable when thus taken simply in the letter, inviting us to 'put on bowels of mercies,' to shrink from no offices of love, even though they should be painful and perilous; yet how much fairer still, how much more mightily provoking to love and good works, when, with most of the Fathers, and with many of the Reformers, we trace in it a deeper meaning still, and see the work of Christ, of the merciful Son of man Himself, portrayed to us here. None can refuse to acknowledge the facility with which all the circumstances of the parable yield themselves to this interpretation. It has been indeed objected, that it leaves the parable beside the mark, and nothing to the matter immediately in hand. But this is not so. For what is that matter? To magnify the law of love, to show who fulfils it, and who not. But if Christ Himself, He who accounted Himself every man's brother, fulfilled it the best, showed how we ought to love and whom; and if his example, or rather faith in his love towards us, is alone effectual in kindling our love to one another, He might well propose Himself and his act in succouring the perishing humanity, as the everlasting pattern of self-forgetting love, and place it in strongest contrast with the

[1] The Vulgate renders ὅ τι ἂν προσδαπανήσῃς, quodcunque supererogaveris. The technical theological term, 'works of supererogation,' finds its suggestion here.

[2] Let us not miss the ἐγὼ ἀποδώσω. 'Trouble not the poor man upon that score; *I* will take those charges on myself;' or it might be, 'Fear not thou to be a loser: *I* will be thy paymaster.'

carelessness and selfish neglect of the present leaders of the theocracy.[1] Such a meaning as this, lurking behind, though one day to pierce through, the literal, and to add to the parable a yet more endearing charm, would be of course latent at the first uttering. He to whom it was then spoken, took all in the obvious meaning; nor is the parable less effectual in commending man's love to his fellow, because it further shadows forth the Son of man's crowning act of love to the whole race of mankind.[2]

Regarding it in this mystical sense, the traveller will be the personified human Nature, or Adam as the representative and head of our race. He has forsaken Jerusalem, the heavenly City, the city of the vision of peace, and is going down to Jericho, the profane city, the city under a curse (Josh. vi. 26; 1 Kin. xvi. 34). But no sooner has he thus left the holy City and the presence of his God, and turned his desires toward the world, than he falls into the hands of him who is at once a robber and a murderer (John viii. 44), and is by him and his evil angels stripped of the robe of his original righteousness, grievously wounded, left covered with almost mortal strokes, every sinful passion and desire a gash from which the life-blood of his soul is streaming.[3] But for all this he is not absolutely dead;[4] for as the utmost cares of

[1] A medieval expositor of this Gospel says of it excellently well: 'Herein is shown that nearness of race or of blood is nothing in comparison to that nearness which is of love and compassion. And because these abound in Christ more than in any other, more than any other He is our neighbour and is more to be loved.'

[2] Compare Tholuck, *Die wahre Weihe des Zweiflers*, p. 63.

[3] H. de Sto. Victore (*Annott. in Luc.*): 'The man here typifies the human race, which in the persons of our first parents forsook the celestial state, and by their sin fell into the misery of this world of exile, being by the cozenage of the old enemy despoiled of the robe of innocence and immortality, and sorely wounded by the taints of original sin.' See Ambrose, *Exp. in Luc.* vii. 73; Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps.* cxxv. 6; and the sermon (*Hom.* 34 *in Luc.*) which Jerome has translated out of Origen. For the later Gnostic perversions of the parable in this direction, see Neander, *Kirchengeschichte*, vol. v. p. 1121.

[4] H. de Sto. Victore: 'For although a man may be infected with such great wickedness that he love nought that is good, he yet cannot be

the Samaritan would have been spent in vain upon the poor traveller, had the spark of life been wholly extinct, so a restoration for man would have been impossible, had there been nothing to restore, no spark of divine life, which by a heavenly breath might be fanned into flame; no truth in him, which might be extricated from the unrighteousness in which it was detained. When the angels fell, by a free self-determining act of their own will, with no solicitation from without, their loss was not in part, but altogether. With man it is otherwise. He is '*half-dead*;' he has still a conscience witnessing for God; evil has not become his good, however weak he may prove to resist it; he has the sense of something lost, and at times a longing for its recovery. His case would be desperate, were there none to restore him but himself; it is not desperate in the hands of an almighty and all-merciful Physician.

He, and He only, can restore to man what he has lost, can bind up the bleeding hurts of his soul, can say to him in his blood, Live (Ezek. xvi. 6). The Law could not do it. 'If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law' (Gal. iii. 21).[1] That was but like Elisha's staff, which might be laid on the face of the dead child, but life did not return to it the more (2 Kin. iv. 31); Elisha himself must come ere the child revive.[2] Or as Theophylact here expresses it: 'The law came and stood over him where he lay, but then, overcome by the greatness of his wounds, and unable to heal them,

blinded by so great ignorance as to know nought that is good . . . The sword of the enemy has not wholly destroyed a man, so long as it has not been able altogether to do away in him the worth of natural good.' Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.* ii. 19): 'On the side on which he can understand and know God a man is alive, on the side on which he is wasted and overwhelmed with sins he is dead.'

[1] The selection of Gal. iii. 16–23 for the Epistle on the 13th Sunday after Trinity, this parable supplying the Gospel, shows the interpretation which the Church puts upon the parable. The Gospel and Epistle attest the same truth, that the law cannot quicken; that righteousness is not by it, but by faith in Christ Jesus.

[2] Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps.* lxx. 15.

departed.' Nor could the sacrifices do better; they could not 'make the comers thereunto perfect,' nor 'take away sins,' nor 'purge the conscience.' Priest and Levite were alike powerless to help: so that, in the eloquent words of a scholar of St. Bernard's,[1] 'Many passed us by, and there was none to save. That great patriarch Abraham passed us by, for he justified not others, but was himself justified in the faith of One to come. Moses passed us by, for he was not the giver of grace, but of the law, and of that law which leads none to perfection; for righteousness is not by the law. Aaron passed us by, the priest passed us by, and by those sacrifices which he continually offered was unable to purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Patriarch and prophet and priest passed us by, helpless both in will and deed, for they themselves also lay wounded in that wounded man. Only that true Samaritan beholding was moved with compassion, as He is all compassion, and poured oil into the wounds, that is, Himself into the hearts, purifying all hearts by faith. Therefore the faith of the Church passes by all, till it attain to Him who alone would not pass *it* by'[2] (Rom. viii. 3).

[1] Gillebert. He completed not unworthily the exposition of the Canticles which St. Bernard had left unfinished at his death.—Compare a noble passage in Clement of Alexandria (*Quis Dives Salv.* 29): 'But who else could it be but the Saviour himself? Or who rather than He would have had compassion upon us who at the hands of the powers of darkness have been nigh done to death with the number of our wounds, with fears, lusts, passions, sorrows, guiles and pleasures? Of these wounds Jesus is the one healer, utterly excising our passions by the roots; not like the law applying empty remedies, the fruits of worthless trees, but laying his axe to the roots of the wickedness. He it is who pours upon our wounded souls wine which is the blood of the Vine of David, who applies and lavishes upon us the oil of the spirit of compassion. He it is who shows to us the bonds of health and salvation as never to be broken, even love, faith and hope. He it is who appoints angels and principalities and powers to minister to us for a great reward, since these also shall be freed from the vanity of the world by means of the revelation of the glory of the sons of God.'

[2] Augustine's proof that our Lord intended Himself by this Samaritan is singular (*Serm.* clxxi. 2): 'When two terms of reproach were cast at

Were it absolutely needful to attach a precise meaning to the '*oil*' and the '*wine*,' we might say with Chrysostom, that the former is the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the latter the blood of passion.[1] On the *binding up* of the wounds it may be observed that the Sacraments have been often called the

the Lord and it was said "Thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil," He might have answered "Neither am I a Samaritan nor have I a devil." He answers, however, "I have not a devil." The term He answers He refuted; the term as to which He was silent He confirmed.' Cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* cxxxvi. 3.

[1] They were sometimes interpreted differently; the oil as the 'gentle consolation,' the wine as the 'stern rebuke.' Thus St. Bernard says of the good pastor: 'Let him be as the Samaritan, watching and observing when he is to present the oil of compassion and when the wine of fervour;' and at more length, *In Cant., Serm.* xliv. 3. So too Gregory the Great (*Mor.* xx. 5): 'In rulers there should be alike a compassion righteous in its consolation and a discipline pious in its wrath; wherefore also to the wounds of that half-murdered traveller who was brought by the Samaritan to the inn, both wine and oil are applied, that the wounds may be stung by the wine and soothed by the oil: so that everyone who is appointed unto the healing of wounds, in the wine may apply the sting of severity, and in the oil the soothing influence of kindness: that by the wine what is putrid may be cleansed, and by the oil what is to be healed may be soothed.' Elsewhere he has resolved this whole history into prayer (*Exp. in Ps.* li.): 'O Lord Jesus, moved by compassion mayst Thou deign to approach me, even me who while going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, while falling, that is, from the highest to the lowest, from that which gives life to that which weakens, have come upon the angels of darkness, who have not only robbed me of the garment of spiritual grace, but also have beaten me and left me nigh unto death. By giving me confidence for the recovery of my health, mayst Thou bind up the wounds of my sins, lest despairing of being healed they rage the worse. Mayst Thou apply to me the oil of remission, and pour on me the wine of penitence. If Thou wilt but place me on thine own beast, Thou wilt raise my helplessness from the earth, my poverty from the mire. For it is Thou who hast borne our sins, Thou who hast paid for us what Thou didst not take. If Thou wilt lead me to the inn of Thy Church, Thou wilt feed me with the refection of Thy body and blood. If thou wilt have care for me, neither do I pass over Thy commandments nor meet the rage of furious beasts. For I need Thy guardianship so long as I wear this corruptible flesh. Hear me, therefore, O Samaritan, me who am robbed and wounded, weeping and groaning, calling aloud and crying with David, Have pity upon me, O God, according to Thy great mercy.'

ligaments for the wounds of the soul; and the hurts of the spirit are often contemplated as bound up, no less than those of the body; and God as He who binds them up.[1] The Samaritan setting the wounded man on his own beast, himself therefore pacing on foot by his side,[2] reminds us of Him, who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich,— and who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Neither is it far-fetched to regard the '*inn*' as the figure of the Church, the place of spiritual refection, in which the healing of souls is ever going forward,—called therefore by some a hospital,—whither the merciful Son of man brings all whom He has rescued from the hand of Satan, and where He, the good physician, cares for them until they shall have been restored to perfect health[3] (Mal. iv. 2; Hos. xiv. 4; Ps. ciii. 3; Matt. xiii. 15; Rev. xxii. 2; and typically, Num. xxi. 9).

And if, like the Samaritan, He cannot tarry,[4] cannot always be in body present with those whose cure He has begun, if it is expedient that He should go away, yet He makes for them a provision of grace sufficient to last till the time of his return. It would be an entering into curious minutiæ, one tending to bring discredit on this scheme of interpretation, to affirm decidedly of the '*two pence*,' that they mean either the two Sacraments, or the two Testaments, or the Word and the Sacraments, or unreservedly to accede to any one of the ingenious explanations which have been offered for them. They do better who content themselves with saying that these include all gifts and graces, sacraments, powers of healing,

[1] Thus Ps. cxlvii. 3: 'He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.' Augustine: 'The binding up of wounds is the restraining of sins.'

[2] Lyser: 'By his own discomfort He sought our comfort.'

[3] Augustine brings out another side of the similitude: 'The inn is the Church in which travellers returning to the eternal country from their pilgrimage are refreshed;' or it is an inn (πανδοχεῖον), because (Origen, *Hom.* 34 *in Luc.*) 'it receives all who wish to enter.'

[4] Ambrose (*Exp. in Luc.* vii. 78): 'This Samaritan was not free to linger long on the earth: He had to return thither, whence He had descended.'

of remission of sins, or other powers which the Lord has left with his Church, that it may keep house for Him till his return. As the Samaritan '*took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him;*'—even so He said to Peter, and in him to all the Apostles, 'Feed my sheep,' 'Feed my lambs' (John xxi. 15–17; cf. xx. 22, 23). To them, and in them to all their successors, He has committed a dispensation of the Gospel, that as stewards of the mysteries of God, they may dispense these for the health of his people. And as it was promised to the host, '*Whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee,*'[1] so has the Lord engaged that no labour shall be in vain in Him, that what is done to the least of his brethren He will count as done to Himself, that they who 'feed the flock of God, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind,' 'when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away' (1 Pet. v. 2, 4).[2]

Let us reverently admire as it deserves to be admired, the divine wisdom with which, having brought this parable to an end, Christ reverses the question of the lawyer, and asks, '*Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto*

[1] Melanchthon: '"Whatsoever thou spendest more, I will repay thee," as much as to say: Labours, perils, lack of counsel are coming upon thee, in all these I will be present with and will help thee.'

[2] Cyprian's use of the parable (*Ep.* 51) forms a sort of connecting link between these two interpretations, the literal and the allegorical: the wounded man is a sinning brother, one who has fallen away in time of persecution. Cyprian, who desired to deal mildly with these lapsed, and to readmit them to Church communion, exclaims: 'Behold where a wounded brother is lying, stricken by his adversary in the battle. On the one side the devil is trying to kill him whom he has wounded. On the other, Christ is exhorting that he whom He has redeemed should not wholly perish. To which of the two shall we bring help, on whose side are we standing? Are we favouring the devil's efforts to kill, and like the priest and Levite in the Gospel, passing by our brother as he lies almost lifeless before us? Or, like priests of God and of Christ, are we imitating what Christ both taught and did, are we snatching the wounded man from the jaws of his enemy, that he may be cured and reserved for the judgment of God?' Cf. Ambrose, *De Pœnit.* i. 6; and Chrysostom, *Adv. Jud., Orat.* viii. 3.

him that fell among the thieves?' The lawyer had asked, 'Who is the neighbour to whom it is my duty to show love?' But the Lord, answering question with question, demands, 'Who is a neighbour, he who shows love, or he who shows it not?'—for it was this which He desired to teach, that love finds its own measure in itself; like the sun, which does not inquire upon what it shall shine, or whom it shall warm, but shines and warms by the very law of its own being, so that nothing is hidden from its light and heat. The lawyer had said, 'Designate my neighbour to me; tell me what marks a man to be such? Is it one faith, one blood, the obligation of mutual benefits, or what else, that I may know to whom I owe this debt?' The Lord rebukes the question, holding up to him a man, and this man a despised Samaritan, who so far from seeking limits to his love, freely and largely exercised it towards one whose only claim upon him consisted in his needs; who assuredly had none of the marks of a neighbour, in the lawyer's sense of the word. The parable is a reply, not to the question, for to that it is no reply,[1] but to the spirit out of which the question proceeded. 'You inquire, Who is my neighbour? Behold a man who asked quite another question, "To whom can I be a neighbour?" And then be yourself the judge, whether you or he have most of the mind of God; which is most truly the doer of his will, the imitator of his perfections.'

To the Lord's question, '*Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?*' the lawyer circuitously replies, '*He that shewed mercy on him*;'—let us hope from no grudging reluctance to give the honour directly and by name to a Samaritan;[2]

[1] Maldonatus is the only commentator I know who has fairly put this difficulty, which is on the face of the parable. It is one of the many merits of this most intolerant and abusive Jesuit (Maldonatus maledicentissimus, as he used to be called), that he never evades a difficulty, but fairly states it, whether he can resolve it or not.

[2] So Bengel: 'It is not from any reluctance that the lawyer abstains from explicitly naming the Samaritan.'

although it certainly has something of this appearance. But let that have been as it might, '*Go*,' said the Lord to him, '*and do thou likewise*' (Luke vi. 36; Col. iii. 12; 1 Pet. iii. 8). These last words will hardly allow us to agree with those who in later times have maintained that this parable and the discourse that led to it are, in fact, a lesson on justification by faith—that the Lord sent the questioner to the law, to the end that, being by that convinced of sin and of his own shortcomings, he might discover his need of a Saviour. The intention seems rather to make the lawyer aware of the mighty gulf which lay between his knowing and his doing,—how little his actual exercise of love kept pace with his intellectual acknowledgment of the debt of love due from him to his fellow-men: on which subject he may very well have had secret misgivings himself, when he asked, '*Who is my neighbour?*' It is true, indeed, that this our sense of how short our practice falls of our knowledge, must bring us to the conviction that we cannot live by the keeping of the law, that by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified,—so that here also we shall get at last to faith as that which alone can justify; but this is a remoter consequence, and not the immediate teaching of the parable.

PARABLE XVIII.

THE FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT.

LUKE xi. 5–8.

THE connexion between this parable and the words that go before is easy to be traced. As the Lord '*was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.*' In reply to this request of theirs He graciously gives them that perfect form of words, which, coming immediately from Him, has ever borne his name. But having done this, He now instructs them further *in what spirit*, with what instancy and perseverance, they ought to pray. There is the same argument as in the parable of the Unjust Judge (Luke xviii. 2 8), from the less to the greater, or more accurately, from the worse to the better;—but with this difference, that here the tardy selfishness of man is set against the prompt liberality of God, while there it is the unrighteousness of man which is tacitly contrasted with the righteousness of God. The conclusion is, if churlish man can be won by mere importunity to give, and unjust man to do right, how much more certainly shall the bountiful Lord bestow, and the righteous Lord do justice.[1] Perhaps there is this further distinction, that here it is prayer for the needs of others, in which we are bidden to be instant; while there it is rather prayer for the

[1] Augustine (*Ep.* cxxx. 8): 'From this we should understand that if a man who against his will is awakened from his sleep by a suppliant is compelled to give, how much more bountifully will He give who knows no sleep, and who wakens us from our sleep that we may ask.'

supply of our own. In neither case may we urge the illustration so far, as to conceive of prayer as an overcoming of God's reluctance, when it is, in fact, a laying hold of his highest willingness.[1] For though there is an aspect under which God may present Himself *to us*, similar to that of the Unjust Judge and of the churlish Friend, yet always with this essential difference,—that his is a *seeming* unwillingness to grant, theirs is a *real*. Under such an aspect of seeming unwillingness to hear did the merciful Son of man present Himself to the Syro-Phœnician woman (Matt. xv. 21). But why? Not because He was reluctant to give, but because He knew that her faith would carry her triumphantly over all obstacles in her path; that through such resistance as He opposed to that faith for a while, it would be called out, strengthened, purified, as, had this trial been spared, it could never otherwise have been. In like manner the great Angel of the Covenant contended with Jacob, wrestled with him all the night; yet allowing Himself at the last to be overcome by him, left a blessing behind Him; and Jacob henceforth was Israel; being permanently lifted up through that conflict into a higher condition, as was expressed by that nobler name which henceforth he bore, 'for as a *Prince* hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed' (Gen. xxxii. 28).

The parable of the Friend at Midnight rests on a familiar

[1] This is finely expressed by Dante (*Parad.* 20), in words which have as much a theological as a poetical interest:

Regnum cælorum violenzia pate
Da caldo amore e da viva speranza,
Che vince la divina volontate,
Non a guisa che l' uomo all' uom sovranza,
Ma vince lei, perchè vuole esser vinta,
E vinta vince con sua beninanza.
'Fervent love,
And lively hope, with violence assail
The kingdom of the heavens, and overcome
The will of the Most High; not in such sort
As man prevails o'er man; but conquers it,
Because 'tis willing to be conquer'd, still,
Though conquer'd, by its mercy, conquering.'—*Cary*.

incident of common life; and, spoken as it is to humble men, the incident on which it rests may easily have come within the range of their own experience: '*Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?*' These words have yielded ample scope for allegorical and mystical interpretations, and some of no little beauty; though we cannot regard them as more than graceful adaptations for pious uses of the Lord's words. For example, the guest arriving at midnight has been explained as the spirit of man, which, weary of its wanderings in the world, of a sudden desires heavenly sustenance;—begins to hunger and thirst after righteousness. But the host, or man himself, in so far as he is 'sensual, not having the Spirit,' has nothing to set before this unlooked-for guest, and in this his spiritual emptiness [1] is here taught to appeal to God, extorting in earnest prayer from Him that which is bread indeed, and heavenly food for the soul.[2] Another interesting adaptation in the same

[1] Augustine: 'Set in the midst of tribulation.'

[2] Bede (*Hom. in Luc.* xi.): 'The friend who came from a journey is our own soul, which, as often as it wanders abroad in search of things earthly and temporal, departs from us. It returns therefore, and longs to be refreshed with heavenly food, so soon as it has come again to itself and begun to meditate on things celestial and spiritual. Whence the suppliant beautifully adds, 'And I have nothing to set before him,' for the soul which after the darkness of the world is panting after God, has no pleasure in thinking of or beholding aught save him.' And Bernard (*In Rogat. Serm.*): 'By the friend who comes to me I understand no other than myself, when deserting things transitory I return unto my heart. The friend comes from a distant country where he was wont to feed swine and to hunger insatiably for the husks. He comes sore pressed by hunger, but alas, he chooses a poor host and enters an empty house. What shall I do for this wretched and pitiable friend? I own he is my friend, but I am a beggar. Why hast thou come to me, my friend, in such necessity? Hasten, he answers, run, awaken that great friend of thine than whom none has greater love, and none greater wealth. Call unto him and say, Friend, lend me three loaves.' Compare Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.* ii. qu. 21); and a discourse which is not Augustine's, but has sometimes been attributed to him (*Serm.* 84, Appendix).

kind we owe to Augustine. He is urging on his hearers the duty of being able to give a reason for their faith, and one not merely defensive, but such as shall win and persuade others; and this, since it may easily happen that one from the heathen world, or a heretic, or even a nominal Catholic, weary of his wanderings in error, and longing to know something of the Christian faith, though lacking confidence or opportunity to go to the bishop or catechists, may come to them, claiming instruction in righteousness at their lips. How greatly it behoved in such a case that they should have something to set before him; or having nothing, they are taught in this parable to whom they should seek for the supply of their own needs and the needs of their friend,—that they go to God, beseeching Him to teach *them*, that so they may be competent to teach others.[1] Vitringa's explanation [2] is a modification of this. For him the guest is the heathen world; the host who receives him are the servants and disciples of Jesus; who in this parable are instructed that they can nourish with bread of life those coming to them, only as they themselves have obtained the same from God; which therefore they must solicit with all perseverance and instancy of supplication.[3] Where such a mystical interpretation has found room,

[1] *Serm.* cv. 2: 'A friend comes to thee from a journey, that is from the life of this world, in which all are passing on as aliens, neither does any abide as a possessor, but to every man there is said: Thou hast been refreshed, pass on, get thee on thy journey, make room for the incomer. Or perchance there cometh from an ill journey, that is from an ill life, some wearied friend of thine, who cannot find the truth by the hearing and receiving of which he may be made happy, but worn out amid all the desires and the poverty of the world he comes to thee as to a Christian and says: Give me an account of it, make me a Christian. And he asks something of which perchance thou in the simplicity of thy faith wast ignorant, and thou hast no means of refreshing the hungry man, but when thus reminded findest thyself needy. For thee perchance simple faith sufficed, for him it does not suffice. Is he to be deserted? Is he to be cast from thy house? Nay rather betake thee to the Lord himself, to him who is asleep with his household, beat at his door with thy prayers, and be urgent in asking.'

[2] *Erklär. d. Parab.* p. 763.

[3] Augustine: 'Whence I live, thence I speak; whence I am fed, this

it will naturally follow that in the '*three loaves*' which the suppliant seeks, some special significance will be looked for. In them various scriptural triads have been traced; as that the host, craving these, craves the knowledge of the Holy Trinity, of God in his three persons;[1] or the three choicest gifts and graces of the Spirit, faith, hope, and charity;[2] with more of the same kind.[3]

'*And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut;*' the house is made up for the night, barred and bolted; '*and my children*'—or, as many take it, '*my servants*'[4]—'*are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee*' (cf. Cant. v. 3). In the parable allegorically interpreted these last words find their spiritual equivalent, and are understood to mean, 'All, who by earlier application have obtained right to be called my children, have secured their admission into my kingdom, and are now resting with Me there; it is too late to apply when the time of admission is past.'[5]

'*I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.*' The strength of the word which the Lord uses here has been a little reduced by our Translators.[6] It is not his '*importunity*' which so

I minister.' Cf. a sermon by Guerricus, *Bernardi Opp.* Ben. ed. vol. ii. p. 1023.

[1] Augustine: *Enarr. in Ps.* cii. 5; *Quæst. Evang.* ii. 21.

[2] Euthymius: 'Loaves; the nourishing teaching of souls.'

[3] Godet: 'The meaning of the image of the *three loaves* must not be demanded from the allegory; it must be drawn from the picture as a whole. One of the loaves is for the stranger, the second for the host, who would naturally share his meal; the third would form the reserve. The idea of full sufficiency (as many as he needeth) is the true application to make of this detail.'

[4] Augustine has taken παιδία so (*Ep.* cxxx. 8): 'As he was already asleep with his servants, a most pressing and importunate petitioner aroused him.'

[5] Augustine: 'Why dost thou knock so unseasonably who in the due season wast slothful? Day was, and thou didst not walk in the light; night has come on, and thou beginnest to knock.'

[6] On some other occasions they have done the same. Χιζομέι ους

much prevails as his '*shamelessness*;'[1] so that we may suppose many askings, each more urgent than the last; although only that one is recorded which at length extorts the gift.[2] Yet it is a '*shamelessness*' mitigated by the fact, that not for himself, but for another, and that he may not fail in the sacred duties of hospitality, he thus pertinaciously urges his request; even as the same may be affirmed of Abraham, who offers us another example of successful '*importunity*,' rising almost to *shamelessness* in asking; he too is pleading not for himself, but for the city where his kinsman dwelt (Gen. xviii. 23–33). With no other arms than those which his '*importunity*' supplies, the suppliant here triumphs in the end; he obtains, not merely the '*three loaves*' which he asked, but '*as many as he needeth*;' like that woman already referred to, from whom the Saviour at first seemed to have shut up all his compassion, but to whom He threw open at the last the ample treasure-house of his grace, bidding her to help herself. Nor is it merely that he thus at last gives all which the other desires; but he who refused at first so much as to send one of his household, himself now rises, and supplies all the wants of his friend; for so 'the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.' On the return of prayers not being always

(Mark i. 10) is more than 'opened' ('cleft' in the Geneva Version); so too βασανιζομένους (Mark vi. 48) than 'toiling;' οἰκοδεσποτεῖν (1 Tim. v. 14) than to 'guide the house;' ἀποσπασθέντας ἀπ' αὐτῶν (Acts xxi. 1) than 'were gotten from them.'

[1] Ἀναίδεια—by the Vulgate happily rendered improbitas, expressing, as this does, an unwearied labour either in good or in bad. The Greeks had a proverb which one scarcely can help being reminded of here, Θεὸς ἀναίδεια, 'Impudence is a god,' expressing in quite another spirit, yet with a similar energy, all which ἀναίδεια will obtain for a man. The Jews, in like manner, have a proverb, 'Impudence is an uncrowned king,' and another, 'Impudence succeeds even with God.' Von Meyer (*Blätter für höhere Wahrheit*, vol. v. p. 45) has some interesting remarks on the ἀναίδεια of this petitioner, and how it is reconcilable with the humility which is praised in the publican (Luke xviii. 13).

[2] Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* cii. 5): 'He extorted from weariness what he cannot extort by his deserts.'

immediate Augustine has many excellent observations, not a few in connexion with this parable;—as this: 'When sometimes God gives tardily, He commends his gifts, He does not deny them;'—'Things long desired, are more sweet when obtained; those quickly given, soon lose their value;'—and again: 'God withholds his gifts for a time, that thou mayest learn to desire great things greatly.' Faith, patience, humility, are all called into exercise by these temporary denials. It is then seen who will pray always and not faint; and who will be daunted by the first ill-success; like the leopard, which, failing to attain its prey at the first spring, turns sullenly back, and cannot be induced to repeat the attempt.[1]

A few concluding words give the moral of all which has been spoken: '*And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*' More is here than merely three repetitions of the same command; since to '*seek*' is more than to '*ask*,' and to '*knock*' than to '*seek*.' In this ascending scale of earnestness, an exhortation is implicitly contained not merely to prayer, but to increasing urgency in prayer, even till the suppliant carry away the boon which he requires, and which God is only waiting for the arrival of the proper moment to bestow.[2]

[1] Stella: 'There are many who in nature and habit are like the leopard, who if at the first or second leap he fails to secure his prey, pursues it no further. Even so are those who, if they be not heard at their first or second prayer, straightway desist from praying and are branded as impatient.'

[2] Augustine: 'To this end God desires to be sought even that they who seek may become able to receive his gifts.—He gives not save to him who asks, lest He may give to him who cannot receive'

PARABLE XIX.

THE RICH FOOL.

LUKE xii. 16–21.

IN the midst of a discourse of Christ's an interruption occurs One among his hearers is so slightly interested in his teaching, but has so much at heart the redressing of a wrong, which he has, or believes that he has, sustained in his worldly interests, that, unable to wait for a more convenient season, he breaks in with that request, at all events untimely, which gave occasion for this parable—'*Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.*' From this confident appeal, made in the presence of so many, it is likely that his brother did withhold from him a share of the patrimony which was justly his. The contrary is often taken for granted—that he had no right, and knew that he had none, to what he is here claiming, but hoped to win from the Lord's insufficient acquaintance with the matter a decision in his favour. There is much in the parable which found its motive in this request, to lead us to the opposite conclusion. That contains a warning, not against unrighteousness, but against '*covetousness*' (ver. 15); which may display itself quite as much in the spirit wherewith we hold or reclaim our own, as in the undue snatching at that of another. It was the extreme inopportuneness of the time he chose for urging his claim, which showed him one in whom the worldly prevailed to the danger of making him totally irreceptive of the spiritual, and drew this warning word from the lips of the Lord. That he should have desired Christ as an umpire or arbitrator,—for this was all he claimed (see Acts vii. 27, 35; Exod. ii. 14);

and this was all which the Lord, without publicly recognized authority, could have been,[1]—in itself was nothing sinful. St. Paul himself recommended the settling of differences among brethren by means of such an appeal (1 Cor. vi. 1–6); and how serious a burden this arbitration afterwards became for the bishops of the Church is sufficiently known.[2]

But although no fault could be found with the request itself, Christ absolutely refused to accede to it; declined here, as ever, to interfere in affairs of civil life. It was indeed most certain that the truth He brought, received into the hearts of men, would modify and change the whole framework of society, that his word and his life were the seed out of which Christian States, with laws affecting property as every thing else, in due time would unfold themselves; but his work was from the inward to the outward. His adversaries more than once sought to thrust upon Him the exercise, or to entangle Him in the assumption, of a criminal jurisdiction, as in the case of the woman taken in adultery (supposing John viii. 3–11 to be authentic); or else in a jurisdiction civil and political, as in the matter of the Roman tribute (Matt. xxii. 17). But on each such occasion He carefully avoided the snare laid for Him, the rock on which so many religious reformers, as eminently Savonarola, have made shipwreck; keeping Himself within the limits of that moral and spiritual world, from which alone an effectual renovation of the outer life of man could proceed. The language in which He puts back this claimant of his interference, '*Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?*' contains an allusion, which it is impossible to miss, to Exod. ii. 14. Almost repeating the words there spoken, He

[1] Grotius explains μεριστής: 'One who is taken as an arbitrator for dividing an inheritance, apportioning a joint property or settling boundaries.'

[2] Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* cxviii. 115) complains of this distraction from spiritual objects, and that he was not allowed to say to those who came to him with cases for arbitration, 'Who made me a judge or a divider over you?' And St. Bernard warns Pope Eugenius of the dangers which from this quarter would beset him.

declares plainly that He will not fall into the error of Moses, nor thrust Himself into matters which lie outside of the present range of his mission.[1] But though refusing this man what he sought, He gives to him something much better than he sought, a warning counsel; and not to him only, but to that whole multitude present: '*Take heed, and beware of covetousness*,'[2]—or better, '*of all covetousness*;'—'*for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth*.'

Fully to understand these words we must understand what '*a man's life*' is, which thus does not stand in the abundance of his earthly goods; of which life therefore this petitioner would not have had more, if, instead of half, he had secured the whole of the disputed inheritance. While we have but one word for '*life*,' the Greek possesses two—one to express the life *which we live*, another to express that life *by which we live*; and it is of this latter which Christ is speaking here. A man may have his living, his *βίος*, the sustenance of his lower life, out of his earthly goods; nay more, they may themselves be called by this very name (Mark xii. 44; Luke viii. 43; xv. 12; xxi. 4; 1 John iii. 17); but his life itself, his *ζωή*, he cannot draw from them.[3] The breath of his nostrils is of God; not all his worldly possessions, be they ever so large, will retain his spirit an instant if that breath be withdrawn. And if this be true of life, merely as the animating principle of man's earthly existence, how much less can life, as identical with peace, joy, blessedness here, and with immortality hereafter, consist in these things which are at once outside of a man and beneath him.

[1] See Hammond, *Paraphrase* (in loc.).

[2] *Ἀπὸ πάσης πλεονεξίας* (Lachmann, Tischendorf); ab *omni* avaritiâ (Vulg.). Augustine (*Serm.* cvii. 3) urges well the force of this '*all*:' 'Perhaps thou wouldst call a man avaricious and covetous if he sought that which belonged to another. But I say that thou must not seek covetously and avariciously even that which is thine. . . . Not only is he avaricious who grasps another's; but he too is avaricious who covetously keeps his own.'

[3] See my *Synonyms of the New Testament* § 27.

They may overlay, hinder, strangle this life; they were threatening to do this in one who evidently cared so much more for a patch of earth than for the kingdom of heaven; but they cannot produce it. This life is *from* God, as it is *to* God. In this double meaning of '*life*' lies the key to this passage, all whose force they fail to educe who accept '*life*' either exclusively in the lower, or exclusively in a higher, sense.

And this solemn truth, that a man's life consists not in his goods; that his lower life may come to an abruptest end, and that losing hold of this, he may have lost hold of all, this Christ proceeds to illustrate by the parable which follows. '*The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully.*' We have no spoiler here, no extortioner, no remover of his neighbour's landmark. His riches are fairly gotten;[1] the earth empties its abundance into his lap; his wealth has come to him in ways than which none can be conceived more innocent, namely, through the blessing of God on toils which He has Himself commanded. But here, as so often, the Giver is forgotten in the gift, and that which should have brought nearer to Him only separates further from Him. The wise king had said long before, 'The prosperity of fools shall destroy them' (Prov. i. 32): this man sets his seal to this word, his prosperity ensnaring him in a deeper worldliness, drawing out the selfish propensities of his heart into stronger action;[2] for indeed out of how profound a heart-knowledge that warning word of the Psalmist proceeds, 'If riches increase, set not thy heart upon them.' It might beforehand be assumed that the danger of setting the heart on riches would be the greatest when these were escaping from our grasp, perishing under our hand. Experience teaches another lesson, that earthly losses are remedies for covetousness, while increase in worldly goods rouses and provokes it;

[1] Augustine (*Serm.* clxxviii. 2): 'Not by removing a landmark, not by robbing the poor, not by defrauding the innocent.'

[2] Ambrose: 'God gives thee abundance that He may either overcome or condemn thine avarice.'

serving, not as water to quench, but as fuel to feed, the fire :[1] 'He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase' (Eccl. v. 10).

'*And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?*' Some find in these words the anxious deliberations of one brought into sore straits by that very abundance for which others were envying him; not knowing which way to turn, and as painfully perplexed through his riches as another through his poverty.[2] Better to say, that the curtain is here drawn back, and we are admitted into the inner council-chamber of a worldling's heart, glorying in his abundance, and realizing to the very letter the making 'provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' To his first words, '*I have no room where to bestow my fruits*,' it has been answered well, 'Thou *hast* barns,—the bosoms of the needy,—the houses of the widows, —the mouths of orphans and of infants.'[3] Had he listened to the admonition of the Son of Sirach, 'Shut up alms in thy storehouses' (xxix. 12), he would not have found his barns too narrow. To one about to bestow his fruits amiss, and so in danger of losing them, Augustine addresses this affectionate admonition: 'God desires not that thou shouldst lose thy riches, but that thou shouldst change their place;

[1] Plutarch applies to the covetous the line, τὸ φάρμακόν σου τὴν νόσον μείζω ποιεῖ, 'Thy remedy but worsens thy disease,' and so the Latin proverb: Avarum irritat pecunia, non satiat, 'Money goads the miser, it does not sate him;' compare Seneca, *Ad Helv.* 11; Augustine, *Serm.* i. 4; and the fine Eastern tale of Abdallah the camel-driver.

[2] So Augustine: 'Man is more perturbed by abundance than by need;' thus too Gregory the Great (*Moral.* xv. 22): 'O the straits that are begotten of satiety! Because of the fertility of his fields the soul of the covetous man is straitened. For by saying "What shall I do," he plainly shows that, overwhelmed with passionate desires, he was labouring beneath the load of his affairs;' and Grotius quotes in this view: *Crescentem* sequitur cura pecuniam, 'As money increases, care follows it.' But Unger much better: 'The parable describes the *rapturous* deliberations of the rich man.'

[3] Ambrose (*De Nabuthe*, 7); cf. Augustine, *Serm.* xxxvi. 9.

He has given thee a counsel, which do thou understand. Suppose a friend should enter thy house, and should find that thou hadst lodged thy fruits on a damp floor, and he, knowing by chance the tendency of those fruits to spoil, whereof thou wert ignorant, should give thee counsel of this sort, saying, "Brother, thou losest the things which with great labour thou hast gathered: thou hast placed them in a damp place; in a few days they will corrupt;"—"And what, brother, shall I do?"—"Raise them to a higher room;"—thou wouldest listen to thy brother suggesting that thou shouldst raise thy fruits from a lower to a higher floor; and thou wilt not listen to Christ advising that thou raise thy treasure from earth to heaven, where that will not indeed be restored to thee which thou layest up; for He bids thee lay up earth, that thou mayest receive heaven, lay up perishable things, that thou mayest receive eternal.'[1]

This would have been *his* wisdom, to provide thus for himself 'bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens which faileth not' (ver. 33). But he determines otherwise; he has another scheme altogether: '*This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul,*[2] *thou hast*[3] *much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.*' Having now at last a citadel and strong tower, to which he may flee and be safe, he will rest from his labours, and henceforth, to put heathen language into the mouth of this truly heathen man, not defraud his genius any more. There is again an irony as

[1] *Enarr. in Ps.* xlviii. 9; cf. *in Ps.* xxxviii. 6.

[2] So Theognis: 'Rejoice with me, dear soul,' Τέρπεό μοι, φίλε θυμέ.

[3] —— *tanquam*
Sit proprium quidquam, puncto quod mobilis horæ,
Nunc prece, nunc pretio, nunc vi, nunc morte suprema,
Permutet dominos, et cedat in altera jura.—Horace, *Ep.* ii. 2. 171.

'As if aught could be ours, and ours alone,
Ours whom a turn of fortune may dethrone,
Which force or favour, money, death, may take
From us, another o'er it lord to make.'—*Martin.*

melancholy as profound in making him address this speech, not to his body, but to his *soul*;—for that soul, though capable of being thus dragged down to a basest service of the flesh, embodied and imbruted, was also capable of being quickened by the divine Spirit, of knowing and loving and glorifying God.[1] And then, though the wise king had said, 'Boast not thyself of to-morrow' (Prov. xxvii. 1), he boasts himself of '*many years*' (cf. Ecclus. v. 1); expects, like Job, to multiply his days as the sand, and to die in his nest (Job xxix. 18).[2] Some words in the Apocrypha (Ecclus. xi. 18, 19) constitute a remarkable parallel: 'There is that waxeth rich by his weariness and pinching, and this is the portion of his reward: whereas he saith, I have found rest, and now will eat continually of my goods, and yet he knoweth not what time shall come upon him, and that he must leave those things to others, and die.' Such a man is here. We have heard what he was saying to himself; it is now permitted us to hear what God at the same instant was saying to him: '*Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.*' '*Thou fool,*'[3]—this title is opposed to the opinion of

[1] This is finely brought out by Basil the Great in his noble sermon on this parable: 'Alas for thy folly! Hadst thou a swine's soul how else wouldst thou congratulate it but thus? So beastlike art thou, so ignorant of the goods of the soul, feasting it thus with meats of the flesh; and what the privy shall receive, is it this thou preparest for the soul?'

[2] Tertullian: 'As his crops prospered he thought of the widening of his barns, and long days of ease.'

[3] Seneca, in an epistle (the 101st) on the sudden death of a rich acquaintance: 'How foolish is it to map out one's life! we are masters not even of the morrow! O what madness is theirs who enter into hopes for the far future! I will buy, I will build, I will trust, I will exact, I will take office, and then I will devote to ease my wearied and ripe old age.' Compare Horace (*Carm.* ii. 18. 17):

> Tu secanda marmora
> Locas sub ipsum funus, et sepulcri
> Immemor struis domos.
>
> 'Yet you, upon death's very brink,
> Of piling marbles only think,

his own foresight which he entertained,—'*this night*,' to the '*many years*' which he promised to himself,—and that '*soul*' which he purposed to nourish and make fat, it is declared shall be inexorably '*required*' of him, and painfully rendered up.[1] But how, it is sometimes asked, did God speak to him? Was it by a sudden presentiment of approaching death, by some strong alarm of conscience, by some mortal sickness at this instant falling upon him, or by what other means? In none of these or like ways, as I understand the words. It fared not with him as with the Babylonian king, to whom, while the word of pride was yet in his mouth, there came a voice from heaven, announcing that the kingdom was departed from him (Dan. iv. 31); nor yet as it fared with Herod, stricken in the hour of his profane apotheosis (Acts xii. 23). Not thus, but more awfully still, while those secure deliberations were going on in his thoughts, this sentence was being determined in the counsels of God;[2] for so does the Lord in heaven deride the counsels of sinners, knowing how soon He will bring them to nothing. Not *as yet* was there any sign or token importing the nearness of the divine judgment; but at the very moment when the decree was going forth that his thread of life should so soon be cut in twain, he was promising himself the long spaces of an uninterrupted security.[3]

Nor is it merely, as our Translation has it, that his soul '*shall be required*,'—it '*is required*,'—of him; the doom is so

> That yet are in the quarries' womb,
> And, all unmindful of the tomb,
> Rear gorgeous mansions everywhere.'—*Martin.*

So too a Greek epigram reminds us, that with all his heaping a man is not able 'to heap up measures of life beyond his due.'

[1] Vitringa (*Erklär. der Parab.* p. 781) makes ingenious reference here to 1 Sam. xxv. 25, observing that this rich fool is the Nabal of the New Testament: 'As his name is, so is he: Nabal is his name, and folly is with him.' Compare ver. 36–38 there with this ver. 20 of our parable.

[2] God, as Grotius explains it, and I believe rightly, said to him this, 'not by way of revelation, but of decree.'

[3] If this be right, Godet is wrong, who writes: 'The words "God said to him" express more than a decree: they refer to a warning which the man hears within him before he dies.'

fearfully near that the present can alone express its nearness. In another point our Version may be bettered. Why not render, '*This night do they require thy soul of thee*' (cf. Job xxvii. 20), leaving who '*they*' are that shall thus require it in the fearful obscurity of the original? Violent men, it may be; but more probably the avenging angels are intended, the ministers of judgment (cf. Job xxxiii. 22: 'Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life *to the destroyers*'); so that we have here the reverse of that 'carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom,' of Luke xvi. 22. The force of this '*required*' (cf. Wisd. xv. 8: 'His life which was lent him *shall be demanded* '), is well brought out by Theophylact: 'For like pitiless exactors of tribute, terrible angels shall require thy soul from thee unwilling, and through love of life resisting. For from the righteous his soul is not *required*, but he commits it to God and the Father of spirits, pleased and rejoicing, nor finds it hard to lay it down, for the body lies upon it as a light burden. But the sinner who has enfleshed his soul, and embodied it, and made it earthy, has prepared to render its divulsion from the body most hard: wherefore it is said *to be required* of him, as a disobedient debtor that is delivered to pitiless exactors;'[1] cf. Job xxvii. 8: 'What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God *taketh away* his soul?' God 'taketh it away;' for he is not as a ship, which has long been waiting in harbour, and when the signal is given, lifts joyfully its anchors, and makes sail for the haven of eternity; but like one by fierce winds dragged from its moorings, and driven furiously to perish on the rocks. The mere worldling is violently separated from the world, the only sphere of delight which he knows, as the fabled mandrake is torn from the earth, shrieking and with bleeding roots.[2]—'*Then whose shall those things be,*

[1] As the other side of the same truth, the Jewish doctors taught that the angel Gabriel drew gently out with a kiss the souls of the righteous from their mouths: with which we may compare the Christian phrase, 'to sleep in the kiss of the Lord,' in osculo Domini obdormire.

[2] See Lucian's inimitable sixteenth *Dialogue* (*Cataplus*), for a commentary, in its way, on these words.

which thou hast provided?' 'He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them' (Ps. xxxix. 6). Solomon long before had noted, among the vanities that cling to wealth, the uncertainty upon whom at the death of the gatherer it would devolve, as of the uses to which he would turn it: 'Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun, because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me: and who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool?' (Eccles. ii. 18, 19, 21, 26; cf. Ps. xlix. 6–20; Jer. xvii. 11; Job xxvii. 16, 17).

'*So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*' Self and God are here contemplated as the two poles between which the soul is placed, for one or other of which it must determine, and then constitute that one the end and object of all its aims and efforts. If for the first, then the man '*layeth up treasure for himself*,' and what the issue of this is, we have seen; the man and his treasure come to nothing together. He has linked himself to the perishable in his inmost being, and he must perish with it. The very enriching of himself outwardly, being made the purpose of his existence, is an impoverishing of himself inwardly, that is, '*toward God*' and in those which are the true riches: for there is a continual draining off to worldly objects, of those affections which should have found their only satisfying object in God; where his treasure is, there his heart is also. Now the Scripture ever considers the heart as that which constitutes a man truly rich or truly poor. He that has no love to God, no large spiritual affections, no sympathies with his brethren, is 'wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,' and shall one day discover that he is so, however now he may be saying, 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing' (Rev. iii. 17). He is poor toward God; he has nothing with God; he has laid up in store no good foundation against the time to come. On the other hand, he only is truly rich, who is '*rich toward God*,' who is rich in God; who has made the eternal and unchangeable the first object of his desires and his efforts.

He in God possesses all things, though in this world he may have nothing; and for him to die will not be to quit, but to go to, his riches.[1]

Christ, having thus warned his hearers against covetousness, and knowing how often it springs from distrust in the fatherly providence of God (Heb. xiii. 5), proceeds to remind them where they may find the best antidote to this and to all over-anxious thoughts for the future, namely, in the assurance of his tender watchfulness and care over them (ver. 22–30); the connexion being thus as close as it is beautiful between this parable and the instructions which immediately follow. In the mention of the ravens, which are fed, though they neither sow nor reap, have neither storehouse nor barn (ver. 24), there is, perhaps, a distinct reminiscence of the feeding of Elijah by the same birds, and allusion to it (1 Kin. xvii. 4, 6).

[1] Cyprian's words addressed to the covetous involve the true interpretation of the passage (*De Op. et Eleem.*): 'The darkness of barrenness has beset thy soul, and as the light of truth departs from it the deep and profound mist of avarice has blinded thy carnal breast. Of thy money thou art the captive and slave; thou guardest money, which, however it be guarded, cannot guard thee; thou increasest an estate which burdens thee the more grievously with its weight; thou rememberest not what God answered to the rich man who with insensate exultation boasted of the plenty of his abounding crops. Why dost thou brood alone over thy wealth? Why dost thou increase the burden of thy estate to thine own punishment, *so that the richer thou art in the world, the poorer thou art before God*?' See Suicer, *Thes.* s. v. πλουτέω.

PARABLE XX.

THE BARREN FIG-TREE.

LUKE xiii. 6–9.

THE eagerness of men to be the first narrators of evil tidings, an eagerness which must spring from a certain secret pleasure in these,[1] although one most often unacknowledged even to themselves, may have moved some to hasten to the Lord with tidings of a new outrage which Pilate had committed. The bearers of this report understood rightly that He was speaking, in the words which conclude the last chapter (ver. 58, 59), of the terrible judgments which men draw down upon their own heads through their sins; but, as is the manner of most, it was only for others that they found a warning here. Of the outrage itself,—which, however, agrees well with the quarrel between Herod and Pilate (Luke xxiii. 12), and may have been either its cause or its consequence,—there is no notice elsewhere; for we cannot accept the scattering or slaying by Pilate of some fanatical Samaritan insurgents, recorded by Josephus,[2] and here adduced by some earlier commentators, as the event referred to. But we know that a revolt, or at the least a tumult, was always dreaded at the great festivals, and various precautions taken against it; a very small spark serving to kindle into a blaze the smouldering elements of Jewish resistance to the

[1] Two languages at least bear melancholy witness to the existence of such a feeling, having a word to express this joy at calamities:—the German, Schadenfreude; and the Greek ἐπιχαιρεκακία.

[2] *Antt.* xviii. 4. 1.

hated Roman dominion, and to provoke measures of severest retaliation on the part of the Roman authorities.[1] Among the numberless atrocities which ensued, it is nothing strange that this, which must have been but as a drop of water in a great ocean, should remain unrecorded. Some outbreak of that troublesome insurrectionary spirit for which the Galilæans were noted,[2] may have been the motive or excuse for this massacre; which yet cannot have been perpetrated in Galilee, where, as subjects of Herod (Luke xxiii. 7, 22), these men would not have been exposed to Pilate's cruelty, but at Jerusalem, which also was the only place where sacrifices were offered (Lev. xvii. 8, 9; Deut. xii. 26, 27; John iv. 20). The language in which their slaughter is reported is significant; they were men '*whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices*;' thus blood was mingled with blood, their own with that of the slain beasts which they offered;[3] the narrators possibly urging this as evidence of the peculiar anger of God against those who so perished. If men might be safe anywhere, or at any time, it would be at the altar of God, and in the act of offering sacrifices to Him. But here, they would infer (just as Job's friends inferred some mighty guilt upon his part from the mighty calamities which overwhelmed him), there must have been some hidden enormous guilt, which turned the very sacrifices of these men into sin,

[1] *Antt.* xx. 5. 3.

[2] The Galilæans Josephus describes as industrious and brave; they were held in a certain contempt by other Jews, partly as less pure in blood, many heathens being mingled among them, whence their country is called 'Galilee *of the Gentiles*' (Matt. iv. 15; see 1 Macc. v. 15, Γαλιλαία ἀλλοφύλων),—and partly as less strictly orthodox (John vii. 52; see i. 46; Acts ii. 7), and departing in many observances from the tradition of Jerusalem. They spoke a harsh broad dialect (Matt. xxvi. 73), characterized by a confusion of gutturals, and not always intelligible to a native of Jerusalem (Lightfoot, *Chorograph. Cent.* lxxxvi. 87). Keim (*Jesu von Nazara*, vol. i. pp. 307–318) has an exceedingly interesting chapter on Galilee and the Galilæans.

[3] A tumult in the temple itself, pitilessly quelled in blood by Archelaus, son of Herod the Great, some thirty years before this, is related at length by Josephus (*Antt.* xvii. 9. 3).

—not a propitiation of God, but a provocation,—so that they themselves became piacular expiations, their blood mingling with, and itself becoming part of, the sacrifices which they offered.

But whether the tellers intended this or not, the Lord at once rebuked the cruel judgments which they certainly had formed concerning those that perished: '*Suppose ye that these Galilæans were sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such things?*' He does not deny that they were sinners, justly obnoxious to this or any other severest visitation from God, but only that the blood-bath in which they perished marked them out as sinners *above all* their fellow-countrymen; and then He leads his hearers, as was his wont (see Luke xiii. 23; John xxi. 22), to take their eyes off from others, and to fix them upon themselves: '*I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*'—not those Galilæans alone, but all of them as well. This is the meaning for ourselves of the calamities which befall others; they are loud and earnest calls to repentance. Instead of exalting ourselves above and against the sufferers, as though we were more righteous than they, and therefore exempt from like tribulations, we shall rather acknowledge that whatever befalls another, might justly have befallen ourselves. When, too, we have learned to recognize in ourselves the bitter root of sin, we shall be prompt to confess that whatever deadly fruit it bears in another, it might have borne the same or worse, under like temptations, in ourselves. But when this is felt, it will be no longer possible to triumph over the doom of any sinner. The thoughts of one, thus taught to know himself, will fall back on his own life and on his own heart. He will see in the chastisement which has overtaken another, the image of that which might justly have overtaken himself; and a message of warning, if also for others, yet first for himself. For he will not deny, as neither does Christ here deny, the intimate connexion between suffering and sin; but it is the sin of the whole race which is linked with the suffering of the whole race; and not of necessity the sin of the individual

with his particular share and portion in this the world's woe.[1] So far from denying this connexion, the more the Christian conscience is unfolded in him, the more close will this connexion appear. At every new instance of moral and physical evil which he encounters in a world that has departed from God, he will anew justify God as the author of all good, even when He asserts Himself negatively as such, in the misery of man as he is a sinful creature separated from his God, no less than positively, in the blessedness of man as he is redeemed and reunited with God.

Our blessed Lord, more fully to illustrate the truth He has in hand, Himself brings forward another instance of a swift destruction overtaking many persons at once: '*Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men*'—or literally, '*debtors above all men*' (Matt. v. 25; vi. 12; xviii. 24; Luke vii. 41)—'*that dwelt in Jerusalem?*' As little in this case were cruel judgments to find place. But while none might attribute a preëminence in guilt to those who were crushed by that falling tower, yet here also, in sudden and strange catastrophes like this, all were to recognize a call to repentance;

[1] Strauss (*Leben Jesu*, vol. ii. pp. 84–90) terms the faith in a connexion between sin and suffering, a 'vulgar Hebrew notion,' from which this passage might at first seem to clear the Lord, but which Matt. ix. 2, John v. 14 lay again at his door, or at theirs who profess to report his words. Christ affirms, and all Scripture affirms, that the sum total of the calamity which oppresses the human race is the consequence of the sum total of its sin; nor does He deny the relation in which a man's actual sins may stand to his sufferings. What He does deny is, the power of other men to trace the connexion, and thus their right in any particular case to assert it. And this, instead of being a 'vulgar Hebrew notion,' is a most deeply rooted conviction in the universal human heart, inextricably entwined in all language—a truth which men may forget or deny in their prosperity, but which in the hour of calamity they are compelled to acknowledge, extorting as it does this confession from them: Our sin hath found us out (Gen. xlii. 21: cf. 1 Kin. xvii. 18; Judg. i. 7). Strange that the barbarous islanders of Melite should have been in moral intuition so far ahead of the learned German Professor (Acts xxviii. 4). Hengstenberg (*Authentie d. Pentateuches*, vol. ii. p. 577 seq.) has some good observations on the subject.

partly as these should remind all of the uncertainty of life, how soon therefore their own day of grace might end; but chiefly as awakening in them a sense and consciousness of sin. For all discords of outward nature, of fire and flood, of earthquake and storm, all fearful accidents, like that of the falling tower, are parts of that subjection of the whole creation to vanity, consequent on the sin of man (Rom. viii. 20, 21); all speak to sinners in the same warning language, '*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*' The near resemblance between these two calamities just instanced, and the doom which actually did overtake the rebellious Jews, the nation which refused to obey this bidding and to repent, can scarcely be accidental, and demands that we shall give to that '*likewise*' of the Lord all its force. It was indeed '*likewise*' that they perished; for the very same forms of violent death overtook them. As the tower in Siloam fell and crushed eighteen of the dwellers in Jerusalem, exactly so multitudes of its inhabitants in that last siege and assault were crushed beneath the ruins of their temple and city; numbers also were pierced through by the Roman missiles,—or more miserably yet, by the swords of their own frantic factions,—in the courts of the temple, in the very act of preparing their sacrifices,[1] so that literally their blood, like that of these Galilæans, was '*mingled with their sacrifices*,' one blood with another.

Those two calamities then are adduced as slight foretastes of the doom reserved for the whole people of the Jews. If they would lay to heart the warning, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance, that doom might even now be averted: but if not, then these beginnings of sorrow should usher in at length the crowning calamity which would make repentance impossible. In the meanwhile, in the fact that hitherto the strokes descended upon them for warning, and not the stroke for excision, they should see proof of the long-suffering of God, not willing that any should perish: and to use Olshausen's words,—'the discourse of Jesus, severe and full of rebuke, is

[1] Josephus, *B. J.* v. 1. 3: 'Many even fell in front of the sacrifices.' Cf. ii. 2. 5.

closed by a parable, in which the merciful Son of man again brings the side of grace prominently forward. He appears as the Intercessor for men before the righteousness of the heavenly Father, as He who obtains for them space for repentance. This idea of the deferring of the judgment of God, so to leave men opportunity to turn, runs through all Scripture; before the deluge, a period of a hundred and twenty years was fixed (Gen. vi. 3); Abraham prayed for Sodom (Gen. xviii. 24); the destruction of Jerusalem did not follow till forty years after the Ascension of the Lord; and the coming again of Christ is put off through the patience of God (2 Pet. iii. 9).'

We have then a parable here concerning the long-suffering and the severity of God. '*He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard.*' 'The peculiarity of the image—that of a *fig tree* in a *vineyard*,—however unlike to the European notion of a mass of unbroken vine-clad hills, is natural in Palestine, where, whether in cornfields or vineyards, fig-trees, thorn-trees, apple-trees are allowed to grow freely wherever they can get soil to support them.'[1] The vineyard here must be the world, and not, as in the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, the kingdom of God: in the midst of the world the Jewish people were set that they should bear much fruit, that they should bring much glory to God (Deut. iv. 6). But the parable, though directly addressed to them, is also of universal application; for as Israel was the representative of all and each who in after times should be elected out of the world to the privileges of a nearer knowledge of God, therefore a warning is here for the Gentile Church, and for each particular soul.[2] Compare Matt. iii. 2; John xv. 2.

[1] Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 413.

[2] Such application of it Ambrose makes (*Exp. in Luc.* xiii. 171): 'That which was spoken of the Jews should, I think, be taken as a warning by all men, and especially by us, bidding us not to occupy, while barren of merit, the fertile soil of the Church: our duty it is, since we are favoured even as pomegranates, to bring forth inward fruits—the

'*And he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.*' There is a wonderful fitness in the simple image running through all Scripture, which compares men to trees, and their work to fruit,[1]—the fruit of a tree, just as the works of a man, being the organic utterance and outcoming of the inner life, not something arbitrarily attached or fastened on from without (Ps. i. 3; Jer. xvii. 8; John xv. 2, 4, 5; Rom. vii. 4). The three kinds of works whereof Scripture speaks may all be illustrated from this image: first, *good* works,[2] when the tree, having been made good, bears fruit after its own kind; then *dead* works,[3] such as have a fair outward appearance, but are not the genuine outgrowth of the renewed man,—fruit, as it were, fastened on externally, alms given that they may be gloried in, prayers made that they may be seen; and lastly, *wicked* works,[4] when the corrupt tree bears fruit manifestly after its own kind. Here it is, of course, those good fruits which are looked for but are not found; both the other kinds of fruit the Jewish fig-tree only too abundantly bore.

What is here parabolically related was on another occasion typically done in a kind of *sermo realis* by the Saviour: when in the last days of his ministry, 'seeing a fig tree afar off

fruits of modesty, the fruits of union, the fruits of mutual charity and love—seeing that we are all enfolded in the one bosom of our mother the Church: that neither the wind hurt us, nor the hail beat upon us, nor the fires of lust inflame us, nor the storm dash us to pieces.'

[1] Bengel (*in Matt.* vii. 16): 'The fruit of a man, as that of a tree, is that in which he abounds, as the result of the nature, good or bad, which permeates all his inner faculties. A doctrine compiled from various sources and hanging upon the tongue is not a fruit; but all that which any teacher from his own heart brings forth and produces, alike in word and deed, as something which flows from his inmost being, like the milk which a mother supplies from her own breast, this is indeed a fruit.' On this same subject Augustine has an admirable sermon (*Serm.* lxxii.).

[2] 'Works of God' (John vi. 28), 'fair works' (Tit. ii. 7), 'good works' (1 Tim. ii. 10), 'works of faith' (1 Thess. i. 3).

[3] 'Dead works' (Heb. ix. 14), and sometimes 'works of the law' Gal. ii. 16).

[4] 'Evil works' (1 John iii. 12), 'works of darkness' (Rom. xiii. 12), works of the flesh' (Gal. v. 19).

having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon' (Mark xi. 13). But He then, as the master of the vineyard now, '*found none.*' Long since the prophets had upbraided their people, that having been ordained to bring forth much fruit to the glory of God, they had fallen short of the purpose for which they were set in the world; bringing forth either bitter fruit or none (Isai. v. 2, 7; Jer. xv.; and, if our Version is to stand, Hos. x. 1); and now the greatest of the prophets implicitly repeats the charge.

'*Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none.*' By these '*three years*' Augustine understands the times of the natural law,—of the written law,—and now, at last, of grace. Theophylact: 'Christ came thrice, by Moses, by the prophets, and thirdly in his own person; He comes, when application of the parable is made to the individual,—in childhood, in manhood, in old age.' Olshausen finds allusion to the three years of the Lord's open ministry; but Grotius had already observed against this, and with reason, that if the '*three years*' are chronological, the '*one year more,*' presently granted, must be chronological also; whereas not *one*, but *forty* years of grace were allowed to the Jews, before the Romans came and took away their name and place.—'*Cut it down*' (see Isai. v. 5, 6; Matt. vii. 19; Luke xix. 41–44); '*why* [*also*] *cumbereth it the ground?*'[1] which '*also,*' helping to explain the sentence passed upon the tree, the Authorized Translation has missed; but not so the Revised. Why should the tree remain, when, besides being itself barren, it '*also*' injured the soil in which it stood; for that '*Why cumbereth it the ground?*'[2] implies something more than that it occupied

[1] Ἱνατὶ καὶ τὴν γῆν καταργεῖ; Ut quid *etiam* terram occupat? (Vulgate); or better, Quare *insuper* terram reddit sterilem? Warum macht er *auch noch* das Land unfruchtbar? (De Wette). Gregory the Great (*Hom.* 31 *in Evang.*): 'For after it has destroyed itself, the question arises why is it *also* to cumber others?' Bengel: 'Not only is it of no use, but *also* it diverts the moisture which the vines would otherwise suck up from the earth, it keeps off the sun, and occupies the ground.'

[2] Καταργεῖν, a favourite word with St. Paul, occurs twenty-six times

the room which might have been filled by another and a fruit-bearing tree. The barren tree *mischiefed* the land, 'troubled' it, as Bishop Andrewes renders the word, spreading injurious shade, and drawing off to itself the fatness and fertility which should have gone to trees rendering a return. It was thus with the Jewish Church, which not merely did not itself bring forth fruits of righteousness, but through it the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles (Rom. ii. 24); the Jews hindering in many ways the spread of the knowledge of God among other nations, through the mischievous influences of their pride and hypocrisy (Matt. xxiii. 13, 15); what was thus true of a Church being not less true of each separate sinner; who is not merely himself unprofitable to God, but by his evil example, by his corrupt maxims, is an obstacle and a stumbling-block to others in the way of godliness.—On that '*Cut it down*' St. Basil bids us note the love which breathes even in the threatenings of God. 'This,' he says, 'is peculiar to the clemency of God toward men, that He does not bring in punishments silently or secretly; but by his threatenings first proclaims them to be at hand, thus inviting sinners to repentance.' That proverb which so finely expresses the noiseless approach of the divine judgments, 'The gods have feet of wool' (Dî laneos habent pedes), true

in his Epistles; and only here besides in the N. T. It is rendered in the Authorized Version in fourteen different ways! '*Cumbereth*,' which the Revised Version has retained, is hardly an adequate rendering, though this in part from a change in the meaning of that word since that Version was made: '*mischiefeth*' I should have preferred. The *occupat* of the Vulgate is equally inadequate. *Impedit*, of the older Latin Version, was better, for the tree is charged not merely with being negatively, but positively evil; it marred and mischiefed the ground in which it stood. Gregory the Great: 'Above ground the tree is unfruitful, and below the surface the soil is made barren. The shade of the unfruitful tree grows ever thicker, and the sunlight is never allowed to reach the soil.' Corn. a Lapide: 'It renders the soil sluggish and barren, not only by its shade, but also by its roots, by which it forestalls and takes from the neighbouring vines the moisture of the soil.' Even so we have in Shakespeare

> 'The noisome weeds that without profit suck
> The soil's fertility from wholesome flowers.'

for others, is *not* true for those who have a listening ear. Before the hewing down begins, the axe is laid at the root of the tree (Matt. iii. 10); laid there that it may be ready at hand for immediate use; but laid there also, that, if possible, this sign and prophecy of doom may avert the actual fulfilment of the doom[1] (2 Chron. xxxiii. 10).

The vine-dresser, who pleads for the tree, and would fain avert its doom, '*Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it*,' is the Son Himself, the Intercessor for men (Job xxxiii. 23; Zech. i. 12; Heb. vii. 25), already in type and figure foreshown to men (Exod. xxxii. 7–11; Num. xi. 19; 1 Sam. vii. 9; Amos vii. 2; Dan. ix. 16–19); not indeed as though the Father and the Son had different minds concerning sinners, the counsels of the Father being wrath, and of the Son mercy; for righteousness and love are not qualities in Him who *is* Righteousness and who *is* Love; they cannot, therefore, be set one against the other, since they *are* his essential being. But in our anxiety to escape this error, we must not fall into the opposite, letting go the reality of God's wrath against sin,—the reality of the sacrifice of Christ, not merely on the side with which it looks towards men, but also on that which looks towards God; this sacrifice being indeed a propitiation of God, and not merely an assurance of God's love towards sinners. How these two truths shall be reconciled, and those two errors shunned, is shown in those words: 'The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world' (Rev. xiii. 8); 'foreordained before the foundation of the world' (1 Pet. i. 20). The sacrifice, though of necessity outwardly brought to pass in time, found place in the purpose of Him who offered, and of Him who accepted it, before all time, or rather, out of time; so that we can never conceive of man as not contemplated by God in

[1] Augustine: 'If he had desired to destroy, he would have held his peace. For no one who desires to strike says, "Behold."' Chrysostom (*De Pœnit. Hom.* 7): 'He threatens punishment that we may shun tempting punishment. He frightens by words, that he may not have to chastise by deeds.'

Christ. There was no change in God's mind concerning the sinner,[1] because He who beholds the end from the beginning, had beheld him from the first as reconciled and reconstituted in his Son (Rom. xvi. 25, 26). From this point of view we may regard the high-priestly intercession of Christ as having been effectual even before He passed into the heavens, there to appear before God for us; for to that intercession all the long-suffering of God toward sinners is to be referred: the *prætermission* of sins through the forbearance of God (Rom. iii. 25) under the Old Covenant, to be followed by a *remission* of them when the designed sacrifice had been actually accomplished:[2]—'the earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it' (Ps. lxxv. 3). Some of the Fathers see here an allusion as well to the intercessory work, which the Church, in its healthy members, is ever carrying forward on behalf of its sick, or that of the Church for the world.[3] No doubt such intercession has a real worth before God (Gen. xviii. 23–33; xx. 7; Exod. xxxii. 11; Job xlii. 8; 1 Sam. xii. 19, 23; 2 Kin. xix. 4, 20; Jer. xv. 1; 1 Tim. ii. 1–4; Jam. v. 14–18; 1 John v. 16); nor need such be absolutely excluded here; yet, this must first and chiefly be referred to that one Intercessor, on whose intercession that of all others must ultimately rest. It is plain, too, that *He* must be meant, for He only to whom all judgment is committed could have received the command, '*Cut it down*;' to men it could in no case have been given (Matt. xiii. 29, 30).

This great Intercessor pleads for men, yet not that they may always continue unpunished in their sins, but only that their sentence may for a while be suspended; so to prove

[1] Augustine (*Serm.* ccliv. 2): 'The compassionate solicits the compassionate. For He who was willing to show himself compassionate, himself brought forward one to intercede with himself.'

[2] On the distinction between the πάρεσις (Rom. iii. 25) and the ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν, see my *Synonyms of the New Testament*, § 33.

[3] As Augustine (*Serm.* cx. 1): 'The vinedresser who makes intercession is the type of every saint who, himself within the Church, prays for those who are outside it.'

whether they will turn and repent; even as the vine-dresser here begs for the barren tree, not that it may be suffered always to stand (for, on the contrary, he allows its doom, should it abide unfruitful, as righteous and good),[1] but asking for it one year of grace: '*If it bear fruit, well*:[2] *and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.*' During this year he '*will dig about it, and dung it*;' will hollow out the earth from around the stem, filling up the space about the roots with manure;[3] as one may now see done to the orange trees in the south of Italy. By these appliances is signified that multiplication of the means of grace which is so often granted to men and nations in the last period of their probation, and just before those means are withdrawn from them for ever. Thus, before the flood, they had Noah, a 'preacher of righteousness,'—before the great catastrophes of the Jewish people some of their most eminent prophets, as Jeremiah before the taking of Jerusalem by the Chaldæans,—and before its final doom they enjoyed the ministry of Christ and of his Apostles. This last is intended here; that richer supply of grace, that freer outpouring of the Spirit, which should follow on the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord. So Theophylact: 'Though they were not made better by the law and the prophets, nor yielded fruit or repentance, yet will I water them by my doctrines and passion; it may be they will then yield fruits of obedience.' No doubt if the history of men's separate lives were written as large as that of nations and Churches, and we could thus read one as plainly as the other, we should oftener perceive that what is true of the one is also true of the other: we should mark

[1] Augustine (*Serm.* cx. 4): Dilata est *securis*, noli esse *secura*, 'The fall of the axe is delayed, but be not thou free from anxiety,' and elsewhere: Distulit *securim*, non dedit *securitatem*, 'He delayed the fall of the axe, He did not give freedom from anxiety:' passages in which the play of *securis* and *securus* can hardly be reproduced.

[2] We have the same suspended sense, with ἐάν, or some word similar understood, Luke xxii. 42; and Thucydides, iii. 3.

[3] Augustine, *Serm.* ccliv.; cx. 1: 'The manure of the husbandman is the sorrow of sinners.' Cf. Ambrose, *De Pœnit.* ii. 1.

critical moments in men's lives to which all the future is linked, on which altogether it turns,—times of gracious visitation, which above all it behoved them to know, and not suffer to escape unimproved. Such a time of visitation to the Jewish people was the Lord's and his Apostles' ministry (Luke xix. 42); then was the last digging about and manuring of the tree which had continued barren so long. But it abode in barrenness; its day of grace came therefore to an end; and, as here is threatened, it was inexorably cut down. In the parable, indeed, our Lord does not positively affirm that the tree will remain unfruitful to the last, but suggests the other as a possible alternative: '*If it bear fruit, well*;' for thus the door of repentance is left open still; the free will of man is recognized and respected, and none are left to suppose that they are shut up, except by their own evil will, in unbelief and hardness of heart,[1] that any but themselves can make inevitable their doom,

[1] Rosenmüller (*Alte und Neue Morgenland*, vol. v. p. 187) quotes from an Arabian writer this receipt for curing a palm-tree of barrenness: 'Thou must take a hatchet, and go to the tree with a friend, unto whom thou sayest, I will cut down this tree, for it is unfruitful. He answers, Do not so, this year it will certainly bear fruit. But the other says, It must needs be,—it must be hewn down; and gives the stem of the tree three blows with the back of the hatchet. His friend restrains him, crying, Nay, do it not, thou wilt certainly have fruit from it this year, only have patience, and be not overhasty in cutting it down; if it still refuses to bear fruit, then cut it down. Then will the tree that year be certainly fruitful and bear abundantly.' Compare Rückert, *Brahmanische Erzählungen*; S. de Sacy, *Chrest. Arabe*, vol. ii. p. 379; the same reappearing in the collection of tracts *De Re Rustica*, entitled *Geoponica*.

PARABLE XXI.

THE GREAT SUPPER.

LUKE xiv. 15–24.

I SHALL not repeat the arguments which convince me that this parable, and that recorded at Matt. xxii. 1–14, spoken as they were upon different occasions, and with (partially) different aims, should be kept wholly distinct the one from the other. I shall throughout assume this as not needing proof, or else as sufficiently proved. The Lord had been invited 'to eat bread'—a Hebrew idiom, to express not merely eating food, but participating in a meal (Gen. xxxi. 54; xliii. 32)—with one of the chief Pharisees (ver. 1). The meal must have been costly and ceremonious. There probably were present friends and kinsmen and rich neighbours of his host (ver. 12); between whom were silent struggles for precedence (ver. 7).[1] Among these guests, hostile, no doubt, in the main to the young Galilæan teacher, whose fame was everywhere spreading, was one who could not forbear expressing his sympathy with some words which fell from the Lord's lips (ver. 15). But there was not the less a certain latent self-satisfaction in this utterance of his. If one reads that utterance aright, above all in connexion with the parable which follows, and which we are expressly told was addressed to him, there were no misgivings on his part as to his own place among those who should 'eat bread in the kingdom of God.' And yet it was quite possible that when the decisive

[1] This snatching at the first places is adduced by Theophrastus (*Char.* 21) as an example of the μικροφιλοτιμία or petty ambition. See also Becker, *Charicles*, vol. i. p. 427

moment arrived, he might miss the blessedness, of which he spoke in such edifying language; well contented with things here, might refuse to be lifted up into that higher world to which he was bidden. To him, quite unconscious of any such danger, and in him to us all, the parable that follows was vouchsafed.

'*A certain man made a great supper, and bade many*'—'*a supper*,' it has been often explained, because, as such takes place at evening, so in the evening of time, in the 'last hour' (1 John ii. 18; 1 Cor. x. 11), Christ came and invited men to the fulness of Gospel blessings. But this is pressing too far a word of fluctuating use; which, even if it does in later Greek signify predominantly a supper, was not upon this account selected here, but as designating the principal meal in the day. Men's relish for things heavenly is so slight, their desire so faint, that God graciously presents these things to them under such alluring images as this, that so they may be stirred up to a more earnest longing after them.[1] The '*many*' whom the maker of the feast first bade are the Jews;[2] yet not so much the entire nation, as those

[1] A sermon by Gregory the Great (*Hom.* 36 *in Evang.*) on this parable begins beautifully thus: 'There is commonly this difference between the delicacies of the body and of the soul, that bodily delicacies, when not being possessed, cause men greatly to desire them, but when possessed and being eaten straightway dispose the eater to contemn them. On the other hand spiritual delicacies, when not possessed, are held in contempt, but when they are possessed are desired, and the more the hungry man partakes of them the more he hungers for them. In the delicacies of the body the longing is pleasant, the experience unpleasant: in those of the soul the longing is naught, but the experience is more pleasing.'

[2] Καλεῖν (= vocare) is the technical word for the inviting to a festival (Matt. xxii. 3; John ii. 2; 1 Cor. 27); that too by which St. Paul expresses that union of an outward word bidding, and an inward Spirit drawing, whereby God seeks to bring men into his kingdom; corresponding to the ἕλκειν of St. John (vi. 44; xii. 32). Both express well that the power brought to bear on man's will is a moral power, and man a moral being; capable, though called, of not coming,—of resisting the attraction that would draw him, if he will. This attraction of bidding, outward by the word, inward by the Spirit, is the 'holy calling' (2 Tim. i. 9), 'calling of God' (Rom. xi. 29), 'heavenly calling' (Heb. iii. 1), 'high calling' (Phil. iii. 14).

who might be presumed the most favourably disposed for the embracing of the truth, the priests and elders, the Scribes and Pharisees, as distinguished from the publicans and sinners, and other more despised portions of the nation; whose turn only arrives when these others have made light of the invitation.

'*And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.*'[1] Some will have it that the guests, in needing thus to be reminded that the feast waited their presence, showed already how lightly they esteemed the invitation. But this is a mistake, such having been, as is noted elsewhere, the usual custom; and their contempt of the honour vouchsafed them, with their breach of promise,—for we must presume that they had engaged themselves to come,—is first displayed in the excuses which they make for their absence. Some interpreters, perhaps the larger number, see in the servant who reminded the guests that the feast was ready,[2] and bade them to enter into the enjoyment of good things, not now far off but near, the Evangelists and Apostles; but this interpretation, which I also adopted once, does not, I must own, now please me so well as the other, which sees in him not any series or company of the servants of the Heavenly King, but one and one only; that One being no less than the great Apostle and High Priest of our profession Himself, who, being in the form of God, yet took upon Him the form of a servant, and as such, according to the prophecies of Him which went before, above all in the later Isaiah, accomplished his Father's will upon earth. In the parable of the Barren Fig-tree the Son assumes exactly the same subordinate position and functions (Luke xiii. 7, 8) as would, according to this distribution of parts, be ascribed to Him here.

[1] Theophylact has here a remarkable comparison: 'For as with a festering and malignant sore which physicians allow to discharge all its foul matter before applying their salves, so also it was needful that sin should display all its innate qualities, and that only then should the great physician impose his remedy.'

[2] Augustine, Apostoli; Gregory the Great, Prædicatorum ordo.

'*And they all with one consent*[1] *began to make excuse.*'[2] Whether there is any essential difference between the excuse, or 'offcome,' as it would be called in one of our northern dialects, which the first guest urges, and that urged by the second, whether these represent hindrances different in their nature and character, by which different men are kept back from Christ, or whether both would alike teach us the same general lesson, that the love of the world robs men of all desire and relish for heavenly things, it is not easy to determine. I prefer to think that a difference is intended. Perhaps the first, who pleaded, '*I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it*,' represents those who are elate of heart through already acquired possessions. He is going to see his estate, not exactly in the spirit of Ahab when he visited the vineyard made his own by wrong (1 Kin. xxi. 15, 16); for there lies no guilt in the thing itself which he is doing; and indeed it adds greatly to the solemnity of the warning here conveyed, that no one of the guests is kept away by an occupation in itself sinful; while yet all become sinful, because the first place, instead of a place merely subordinate, is allotted to them. But he is going to see his possession that he may glory in it, as Nebuchadnezzar gloried as he walked in his palace and said, 'Is not this great Babylon, that I have built . . . . by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?' (Dan. iv. 30). But while he thus represents those whom 'the lust of the eye and the pride of life' detain from Christ; with the second guest it is rather the care of this life, not the pride of having, but the anxiety of getting, which so fills his soul that there is no room for higher thoughts or desires. He has made an

[1] Παραιτήσεως (Bengel), καρδίας (Grotius), συνθήκης (Euthymius), γνώμης (Valckenaer), φωνῆς (Olshausen), ὁρμῆς, αἰτίας, ψυχῆς, or some other such word, must be here supplied. The Revised Version retains the 'consent' of the Authorized, but naturally prints it in italics.

[2] Παραιτεῖσθαι is used for 'refuse' and 'make excuse:' for the first, Acts xxv. 11; for the second at ver. 19, where ἔχε με παρῃτημένον is rather a Latin idiom (habeas me excusatum) than a Greek. Ἐπαινεῖν τὴν κλῆσιν is the more classic phrase.

important purchase, and cannot put off for a single day the trial of how it is likely to turn out;[1] '*I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them.*' He, as he insinuates, is at the very point of starting (πορεύομαι), and begs that he may not be detained. The number five may not perplex us; Elijah finds Elisha ploughing with *twelve* yoke of oxen (1 Kin. xix. 19). Both of these guests offer fair words, '*I pray thee have me excused,*' even while they evade the invitation. We must in neither case regard the excuse as invented, and resting on no ground of facts, however the more usual way in the world may be to see first, and to buy afterwards. So, as is expressly recorded, does the virtuous woman of the Book of Proverbs: 'She considereth a field, and buyeth it' (xxxi. 16). She does not, as the invited guest of the parable, buy it first, and go to see it afterwards.

If in these two it is the pride and the business, in the last it is the pleasure, of the world which keeps him from Christ. 'See you not that I have a feast of my own? why trouble me then with yours? *I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.*'[2] According to the Levitical law, this would have been reason sufficient why he should not go to battle (Deut. xxiv. 5); but it is none why he should not come to the feast[3] (1 Cor. vii. 29). He, however, counts it more than sufficient. The other guests, conscious of the

[1] So Augustine (*Serm.* cxii. 2): 'In the purchased farm mastership is denoted: pride therefore is reproved.' His mystical explanation of the things which kept away the second guest is less satisfactory, but this is as true as beautiful: 'The love of earthly things is the clog of the spiritual wings. Behold thou didst lust and thou art caught. Who will give thee wings, as a dove's, when wilt thou fly to where thou mayst truly rest, seeing that here where thou art foully caught, thou didst perversely desire to rest?' Cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* cxxxviii. 10.

[2] On the same grounds Crœsus would have excused his son from the great hunting party which had for him so fatal an issue (Herodotus, i. 36): 'For he is newly married and is busied with that.'

[3] Gerhard sums up well the three hindrances in three words, 'Position, wealth, pleasure;' and Hildebert in two monkish verses evidently interprets as I have done:

insufficiency of the pleas which they urged, gave at least courteous denials, would have the servant carry back fair words to the master of the feast; but this one has a reason perfectly valid why he should not attend, and, except in so far as his '*I will not*' clothes itself in the form of '*I cannot*,' does not trouble himself to send any apology for his absence.[1] One may trace here the same ascending scale of contumacy in the bearing of the guests, although not so strongly marked, as in the other parable (Matt. xxii. 5, 6), where some make light of the message, others evil entreat and kill the messengers. The first of these guests would be very glad to come, if only it were possible, if there were not a constraining necessity which unfortunately keeps him away. It is a needs be, so at least he describes it, so he would have it represented to the maker of the feast. The second alleges no such constraining necessity, but is simply going upon sufficient reason on another errand; yet he too prays to be excused. The third has engagements of his own, and declares outright, '*I cannot come*.' It is beautifully remarked by Bengel that there is another buying of a field (Matt. xiii. 44), another setting of the hand to the plough (Luke ix. 62), the participation in another wedding (2 Cor. xi. 2), which would not have hindered the accepting of this invitation, since rather they would one and all have been identical with it.

In what remarkable connexion do their excuses stand to the declaration of the Saviour which presently follows: 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and

> Villa, boves, uxor, cœnam clausere vocatis;
> Mundus, cura, caro cælum clausere renatis.

'A farm, a yoke of oxen, a wife closed the supper to the bidden guests; The world, the cares of business, the flesh close heaven to men who have been born again.'

[1] Bengel: 'The maker of this excuse, as he seems to have a better seeming and more honourable reason, so also exceeds the rest in rudeness.' We may quote here Seneca's words (*Ep.* 19): 'The cause lies in the unwillingness, the impossibility is the excuse.'

his own life also, he cannot be my disciple;'[1] and how apt a commentary the words of St. Paul supply, 'This I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it' (1 Cor. vii. 29–31); since it was not the having,—for they had nothing which it was not lawful for men to have,—but the unduly loving these things, which proved their hindrance, and ultimately excluded them from the feast.

'*So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things;*' declared the ill success which he has met,—reported to him the excuses which all had made;—even as hitherto in all likelihood not so much as one among the spiritual chiefs of the Jewish nation had attached himself openly and without reserve to Christ (John vii. 48). '*Then*[2] *the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes*[3] *of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed,*[4] *and the halt, and the blind.*' The anger of God, and we have this anger expressly declared in two other of the parables (Matt. xviii. 44; xxii. 7), is the anger of despised love; yet not for this the less terrible. This second class of invited must still be sought *within the city*; we have not therefore yet arrived at the calling of the Gentiles. There lies a distinct reminiscence here of the precept given just before to him at whose table the Lord was sitting; 'Call thou the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind' (ver. 13). The great Giver of the heavenly feast fulfils his own command. *He* bids to *his* table the spiritually sick, the

[1] Of all the excuses made by the invited guests, Bengel well says: 'All these might have been cured by that holy hatred,' ver. 26.

[2] Ambrose: 'After the careless insults of the rich.'

[3] Πλατεῖαι and ῥύμαι occur together (Isai. xv. 2, LXX).

[4] Τοὺς ἀναπήρους. The word, occurring twice in this chapter (ver. 13, 21), is found nowhere else in the N. T., not once in the Septuagint, and only once (2 Macc. viii. 24) in the Apocrypha. In Plato (*Crit.* 53 *a*) the ἀναπήροι keep company as here with the χωλοί and the τυφλοί.

spiritually needy; while the rich in their own virtues, in their own merits, at once exclude themselves, and are excluded by Him (Luke vi. 24, 25; Rev. iii. 17). The people who knew not the law, the despised and the outcast, these should enter into the kingdom of God, before the wise, the prudent,—before those who said they saw, who thanked God they were not as other men, who had need of nothing.

'*And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded.*' The suggestion of some later commentators, as of Meyer, to the effect that the servant, knowing what his Master's mind would be, had anticipated this command of his, and had already brought the gracious message to them to whom he is now bidden to bring it, that there is, in fact, no interval of time to be supposed here during which the servant fulfils a new commission which he has received, but only an announcement of its fulfilment, is ingenious, and certainly is not without its attractions, but does not compel assent. He proceeds: '*And yet there is room.*' Hereupon, since grace will as little as nature endure a vacuum,[1] he receives a new and last commission: *Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.*' If those '*in the streets and lanes of the city*' were the more abject among the Jews, the meaner, the more ignorant, the more deeply sunken in sin; then those without the city,—which '*city*' we must take as symbol of the theocracy—in the country round about, wandering in the highways, and camping as gipsies now-a-days, under the hedges,[2] will be the yet more despised and morally abject Gentiles, the *pagans*, in all senses of that word.[3] It will thus appear that the parable, hitherto historic, becomes prophetic here; for it declares how God had a larger purpose of grace than could be satisfied by the coming in of a part and remnant of the

[1] Bengel: 'Nature and grace alike abhor a vacuum.'

[2] Bengel: 'Hedges, which serve beggars for walls.'

[3] Euthymius: 'The dwellings of the Gentiles, as not fortified by the law and the special guardianship of God as were those of the Jews, and as trampled upon by devils.'

Jewish people,—that He had prepared a feast, at which more should sit down than they,—founded a Church with room in it for Gentile as for Jew,—those too being 'fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.' It is not that this is explicitly declared, for the time was not yet for the unfolding of this mystery; but it is here wrapt up, and, like so much else in Scripture, biding its time.[1]

'*Compel them to come in*,' has always been a favourite text with the persecutor and the inquisitor; with all who, doing violence to the rights of conscience, would fain find in Scripture a warrant or a pretext for this. It must be owned, too, that others to whom one would very unwillingly apply such names have appealed to these words as justifying that forcible separation of men from their errors, that endeavour to save men against their will, from which, where the power is present, it is often so difficult to abstain. Thus Augustine, writing to Count Boniface, and urging that a certain constraint on the part of the civil power might be fitly used for the bringing back of the Donatists to the unity of the Church, appeals to this parable in proof.[2] And in what he thus urges Calvin finds nothing amiss, but the contrary rather.[3] And yet it is strange how there ever could have been drawn from these words arguments for any compulsion but a moral one. For first, dealing with the parable in the letter, to suppose any other compulsion save that of strong persuasion is idle; for how can we imagine this single servant,—he is but one throughout,—driving before him, from the country into the city, a flock of unwilling guests, and these gathered from the rude and lawless class unto whom he is now sent? But,

[1] Godet has said happily here: 'As verse 21 is the text of the first part of the Acts (i.–xii. conversion of the Jews), so are verses 22 and 23 of the second (xiii.–end, conversion of the Gentiles), and even of the present economy.'

[2] *Ep.* 185; compare *Ep.* 50; *Serm.* cxii. 7; *De Unit. Eccles.* 20; and Bernard, *De Grat. et Lib. Arbit.* 11.

[3] 'Although faith is voluntary yet we see that by such methods the obstinacy of those who only obey when compelled may usefully be subdued.'

indeed, this '*Compel them to come in*' is spoken with quite a different intention. The giver of the feast does not anticipate on their parts any reluctance to accept his invitation, nor any indifference toward it, which should need to be forcibly overcome. What rather he expects is that these houseless dwellers in the highways and by the hedges will hold themselves so unworthy of the invitation as hardly to be persuaded that it was intended for them; will not be induced without a certain constraint to enter the rich man's dwelling, and share in his magnificent entertainment. And when we pass on to the spiritual thing signified, since faith cannot be forced, what can this compelling mean,[1] save that strong earnest exhortation, which the ambassadors of Christ will address to their fellows, when themselves deeply convinced of the tremendous issues which are for every man linked with the acceptance or rejection of the message which they bear? They will '*compel*,' but only as the angels; who, when Lot lingered, laid hold upon his hand and brought him forth, and set him forcibly beyond the limits of the doomed city (Gen. xix. 16); or the ambassadors of Christ will, in another way, '*compel*,' for they will speak as delivering his message who has a right to be heard by his creatures,—who not merely entreats, but commands, all men everywhere to repent and believe the Gospel.[2] Anselm observes, that God compels men to come in, when He drives them by strong calamities to seek and find refuge with Him and in his Church;[3] or, as Luther has it, they are compelled to come in, when the law is broadly

[1] Even Maldonatus explains it thus. Sinners, he says, are to be so entreated, 'that after a manner they may seem to be compelled;' and Bengel: 'This does not apply to every kind of compulsion. . . . Paul in his fury for Judaism compels in one fashion, Paul the servant of Jesus Christ in another.'

[2] Euthymius brings out well this thought which lies hid in that '*Compel*': 'Because in these cases the gospel must be more curtly and insistently proclaimed, as with men mightily possessed by devils and sleeping amid the deep darkness of deceit.'

[3] So Gregory the Great (*Hom.* 36): 'Those therefore who, when broken down by worldly adversity, return unto the love of God, are compelled to come in.'

preached, terrifying their consciences,[1] and driving them to Christ, as their only refuge and hope.

The parable closes with an indignant menace: '*For I say unto you, That none of those men*[2] *which were bidden shall taste of my supper.*' But whose menace is it? Is it that of the giver of the feast? or is it that of Christ, standing outside of the parable, and speaking in his own person and name? Either answer has its own embarrassments. Take these as words of the householder in the parable, and how account for the plural '*you*,' addressed to the single servant?—the suggestion that these words are spoken to the guests that have accepted the invitation, and that here is the explanation of this '*you*,' being very unnatural. I take the words as rather the Lord's own, and spoken in his own person. For the moment He throws off, or half throws off, the disguises under which He habitually walks among the children of men. Turning to his hearers who had been watching for his harm, He assumes for an instant that central place in the kingdom of God, bringing home a '*tua res agitur*' to each and all of them who had been listening to Him, so perfectly content with themselves. It is He, as here He lets them know, who receives and excludes. He has a right to speak of the supper as '*his* supper,' and He does so speak, passing for one indignant moment from the kingdom of shadows to that of substances, while He pronounces the doom of his enemies. Exclusion, total and final, from his supper, to which, when

[1] So Buonaventura: 'With the threat, that is, of eternal punishments and a manifestation of present ones.'

[2] Bengel bids us to note what we might easily miss, namely our Lord's use of ἀνδρῶν, and not ἀνθρώπων, here. Though as much is not expressly stated, yet the whole course of the parable implies that they were the homines ampli, the men of rank and wealth in the city, to whom the first invitation came; they and they only being therein charged with the guilt or threatened with the penalties of refusal. All this is implied in the use of ἄνδρες here, which would not have fitted either the second detachment of guests or the third: the refusers are the 'wise,' the mighty the 'noble' of 1 Cor. i. 26; to whom the heavenly calling so often comes in vain. Bengel also well remarks on *those men*, 'The pronoun has a separative force.'

they saw others entering, the despisers might desire to be admitted, this shall be the penalty of their contempt. There is such a bitter cry, the repentance as of Esau, when it is plainly seen that the birthright has been transferred to another; but it does not bring back the blessing (Heb. xii. 17). That is forfeited for ever; and no after earnestness avails anything to reverse the doom (Prov. i. 28; Matt. xxv. 11, 12; John viii. 21).

Comparing this parable and that of the Marriage of the King's Son, we may note with how fine a skill all the minor circumstances are arranged to be in consistent keeping in each. There the principal person, being a king, has armies at his command, whole bands of servants to execute his behests. The refusal to accept *his* invitation was there, according to Eastern notions of submission, nothing less than rebellion; and, being accompanied with outrages done to his servants, called out that terrible retribution. Here, as the offence is in every way lighter, so also is the penalty; that is, in the outward circumstances which supply the framework of the parable, being no more than exclusion from a festival; though indeed not lighter, when taken in its spiritual signification; for it is nothing less than exclusion from the kingdom of God, 'everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power'

PARABLE XXII.

THE LOST SHEEP.

MATTHEW xviii. 12–14; LUKE xv. 3–7.

THE words with which the three parables of Luke xv. are introduced, '*Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him*,' must not be here understood as designating some single and definite moment of time. The Evangelist is describing rather what at this period was the prevailing feature of Christ's ministry (cf. Mark ii. 15; Luke vii. 37), namely that, as by a secret attraction, it drew the outcasts of the nation to Him and to the hearing of his word.[1] Of these '*publicans and sinners*,' the former were men infamous among their countrymen by their very occupation;[2]

[1] Grotius: 'This way of speaking [ἦσαν ἐγγίζοντες] signifies a continued and daily procedure.' Cf. Luke iv. 31; Mark ii. 18.

[2] Publicans (τελῶναι, ἀπὸ τοῦ τέλος ὠνεῖσθαι) were of two classes. The *publicani*, so called because they gathered the *publicum*, or state revenue, were commonly Roman knights, who farmed the taxes singly or in companies, and this occupation was very far from being in disesteem or dishonour. Thus Cicero, *Pro Leg. Man.* 7: 'The tax-farmers, a most honourable and distinguished class of men;' cf. *Pro Planc.* 9. Besides these were the *portitores*, or *exactores*, the τελῶναι of the N. T., and of Josephus (*B. J.* ii. 14. 4), men of an inferior sort, freedmen, provincials, and the like, who, stationed at frontiers, at gates of cities, on rivers, at havens ('selling the passage of the very air, the land, and the sea:' Tertullian), did the lower work of the collection. They were everywhere hateful for their rudeness, their frauds, their vexations and oppressions: we possess long lists of opprobrious epithets with which among the Greeks they were assailed. Cicero (*In Vatin.* 5) tells Vatinius that he must have supposed himself a publican, 'Since you most thievishly ransacked every man's house, the warehouses and the ships, entangled men engaged

the latter, such as, till awakened by Him to repentance and amendment of life, had been notorious transgressors of God's holy law (Luke vii. 39). These He did not repel, as one fearing pollution from their touch; but received them graciously, taught them freely, and lived in familiar intercourse with them. At this the Scribes and Pharisees murmured and took offence.[1] They could better understand a John Baptist, fleeing to the wilderness, separating himself from sinners in the whole outward manner of his life, as well as inwardly in his spirit. And this outward separation from sinners, which was the Old Testament form of righteousness, may have been needful for those who would preserve their purity in those times of the law, and until He came, who brought powers of good to bear upon the world's evil far mightier than ever had been brought before. Hitherto it may have been their wisdom who knew themselves predisposed to the infection to flee from the infected; but He was the physician who boldly sought out these, that his health might overcome their disease, his righteousness their sin. But this seeking out and not shunning of sinners was just what

in business with the most unjust decrees, terrified the merchants as they landed, and delayed their embarkation.' Chrysostom (*De Pœnit. Hom.* ii. 4): 'The tax-gatherer is the personification of licensed violence, of legal sin, of specious greed:' while the modern Greek has a proverb, 'When the devil is poor, he becomes a tax-gatherer.' But there was that which made keener yet the scorn and more intense the hatred with which the Jewish publicans were regarded by their own countrymen. They were nothing less than renegades and traitors, who for filthy lucre's sake had sided with the enemy, and now collected for a profane heathen treasury that tribute which was the abiding token of the subjection of God's people to a Gentile yoke. This scorn and hate found utterance in a thousand ways; no alms might be received from their money-chest; it was not even lawful to change money there; their testimony was not received in courts of justice; they were as the heathen (to keep which in mind adds an emphasis to Luke xix. 9), and in some sort worse than the heathen. See the *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Antt.* s. v. Publicani, p. 806; Deyling, *Obss. Sac.* vol. i. p. 206; Herzog, *Real-Encyclop.* s. vv. Zoll, Zöllner.

[1] Gregory the Great (*Hom.* 34 *in Evang.*): 'Out of the dryness of their hearts they blamed him, the Fountain of compassion.'

the Scribes and Pharisees could not understand. They had neither love to hope the recovery of such, nor medicines to effect that recovery; nor yet antidotes to preserve themselves, while making the attempt.

An earlier expression of their discontent had called out those significant words, 'They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance' (Luke v. 31, 32); and now their later murmurings furnish the motive of the three parables which follow. In all of these Christ would shame the murmurers, holding up to them the angels of God, and God Himself, rejoicing at the conversion of a sinner; and contrasting this liberal joy of heaven with the narrow discontents and envious murmurings of earth. Heaven and its holy inhabitants welcomed the penitent; only his fellow-sinners kept him proudly aloof, as though there had been defilement for them in his touch; as though they were wronged, if he were freely forgiven.

But this is not all. Not merely was there joy in heaven over the penitent sinner, but *more* joy over one such than over ninety-nine such as themselves. The good that might be in them Christ does not deny. Many among them, no doubt, had a zeal for God, were following after righteousness such as they knew it, a righteousness according to the law. But if now that a higher righteousness was revealed,—a righteousness by faith, the new life of the Gospel,—they obstinately refuse to participate in it, then such as would receive this life from Him, however widely in times past they might have departed from God, should now be brought infinitely nearer to Him than themselves; as the one sheep which had wandered was brought home to the house, while the ninety and nine abode in the wilderness; as for the prodigal a fatted calf was slain, while the elder brother had never received so much as a kid (ver. 29). Nay, they are bidden at last to beware lest the spirit which they are allowing should exclude them altogether from that new kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, into

which they, no less than the publicans and sinners, were invited freely to enter.

Of the three parables in this chapter, the two earlier set forth to us mainly the *seeking* love of God; while the third describes rather the size and growth, responsive to that love, of repentance in the heart of man. The same truth is thus presented successively under different aspects,—God's seeking love being set forth first, since all first motions towards good are from Him; yet is it the same truth in all; for it is the confluence of these two streams, of this drawing and seeking love from without, and of the faith by this awakened from within, of the objective grace and the subjective faith, out of which repentance springs. And thus the parables together constitute a perfect and harmonious whole. The first two speak nothing of a changed heart and mind toward God; nor, indeed, would the images of a wandering sheep and a lost piece of money give opportunity for this; the last speaks only of this change, and nothing of the antecedent working of the spirit of God in the heart, the goings forth of his power and love, which yet must have found the wanderer, before he could ever have found himself, or found his God. These parables are thus a trilogy, which again is divided into two and one; St. Luke himself distinctly marking the break and the new beginning which at ver. 11 finds place.

There are other inner harmonies and relations between them. Thus there is a seeming anti-climax in the numbers, —one in a hundred,[1]—one in ten,—one in two; which is a real climax, as the sense of the value of the lost would increase with the larger proportion which it bore to the whole. And other human feelings and interests are involved in the successive narratives, which enhance in each successive case the anxiety for the recovery of that which is in danger of

[1] This was a familiar way of numbering and dividing among the Jews, of which examples are given by Lightfoot here. There is also a striking saying attributed to Mahomet, in which the same appears: The Lord God has divided mercy and pity into a hundred parts; of these, He has retained ninety and nine for himself, and sent one upon earth (Von Hammer, *Fundgruben d. Orients*, vol. i. p. 308).

perishing. The possessor of a hundred sheep is in some sort a rich man, therefore not likely to feel the diminution of his flock by one at all so deeply as the woman who, having but ten small pieces of money, should lose one of these; while the intensity of her feeling would fall very short of the grief of a father, who, having but two sons, should behold one out of these two go astray. Thus we find ourselves moving in ever narrower, and so ever intenser, circles of hope and fear and love, drawing in each successive parable nearer to the innermost centre and heart of things.

So also in each successive case we may see shadowed forth on man's part a deeper guilt, and thus on God's part a mightier grace. In the first parable the guilt implied is the smallest. The sinner is set forth under the image of a silly wandering sheep. It is only one side of the truth, but yet a most real one, that sin is oftentimes an ignorance; nay, in a greater or a less degree it is always such (Luke xxiii. 34; Acts iii. 17; 1 Tim. i. 13); the sinner knows not what he does, and if in one aspect he deserves wrath, in another he challenges pity. He is a sheep that has gone astray, oftentimes ere it knew what it was doing, ere it had so much as learned that it *had* a shepherd, or belonged to a fold. But there are others, set forth under the lost piece of money, who knowing themselves to be God's, with his image stamped on their souls, even the image of the Great King, do yet throw themselves away, renounce their high birth, and wilfully lose themselves in the world. *Their* sin is greater; but a sin worse even than theirs is behind,—the sin of the prodigal. To have tasted something of the love of God, to have known Him, not as our King who has stamped us with his image, but as our Father, of whose family we are; and to have despised that love, and forsaken that house—this is the crowning guilt; and yet the grace of God is sufficient to forgive even this sin, and to bring back this wanderer to Him.[1]

[1] Bengel gives it not quite as I have done above: 'The sheep, the piece of silver, the lost son; these answer respectively to the stupid sinner.

With so much of introduction, we may proceed to consider these parables one by one; and first this of the Lost Sheep. '*What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?*' It might at first sight appear as though the shepherd were caring for the one sheep strayed at the expense, or at the hazard at least, of all the others, leaving as he does them, the '*ninety and nine in the wilderness.*' But '*the wilderness*' here is no sandy or rocky desert, the haunt of wild beasts or of wandering robber hordes; rather wide extended grassy plains, steppes or savannahs, called 'desert' because without habitations of men, but exactly the fittest place for the pasture of sheep.[1] Thus we read in St. John (vi. 10) that 'there was much grass' in a place which by St. Matthew is called 'desert' (xiv. 15; cf. Ezek. xxxiv. 25); and we commonly attach to 'desert' or 'wilderness' in Scripture, images of far more uniform sterility and desolation than the reality would warrant. Parts, it is true, of the larger deserts of Palestine or Arabia are as desolate as can be imagined, though as much from rock as from sandy levels; yet on the whole they offer far more variety of scenery, much wider extents of fertile or at least grassy land, than is commonly assumed.[2] We must understand then that the

to him who is plainly ignorant of himself, and to the conscious and voluntary.'

[1] Compare Virgil, *Georg.* iii. 341:—

> Sæpe diem noctemque et totum ex ordine mensem
> Pascitur, itque pecus longa in deserta sine ullis
> Hospitiis: tantum campi jacet.

'Often the grazing lasts day and night throughout an unbroken month, and the flock journeys into far-reaching deserts, with no fixed resting-place: so great is the expanse of plain.'

[2] This is the admirable description of a late traveller in the East: 'Stern and monotonous as may be called the general features of a desert, let not the reader suppose that it is all barren. There are indeed some accursed patches, where scores of miles lie before you, like a tawny Atlantic, one yellow wave rising before another. But far from unfrequently there are regions of wild fertility, where the earth shoots forth a jungle of aromatic shrubs, and most delicious are the sensations

residue of the flock are left in their ordinary and safe pasturage, while the shepherd goes in search of the one which has strayed. There is a peculiar fitness in this image as addressed to the spiritual rulers of the Jewish people. They too were shepherds; continually charged, rebuked, warned, under this very title (Ezek. xxxiv.; Zech. xi. 16); under-shepherds of Him who sets forth his own watchful tenderness for his people by the same image (Isai. xl. 11; Jer. xxxi. 10; Ezek. xxxiv. 12; xxxvii. 24; Zech. xiii. 7; cf. Ps. xxiii. 1; lxxx. 1);—yet not only were they no seekers of the lost,[1] no bringers back of the strayed, no binders-up of the broken, but they murmured against Him, 'the Shepherd of Israel,' the 'great Shepherd of the sheep,' because He did in his own person what they, his deputies, so long had neglected to do, Himself meeting and making good in his own person all these omissions of theirs.

In the order of things natural, a sheep which could wander away from, could also wander back to, the fold. But it is not so with a sheep of God's pasture. Such can lose, but it cannot find itself again. There is in sin a *centrifugal* tendency, and the wanderings of this wanderer could be only further and further away. If, therefore, it shall be found at all, this can only be by its Shepherd's going to seek it; else, being once lost, it is lost for ever.[2] The Incarnation of the Son of

conveyed to the parched European, as the camel treads down the underwood with his broad foot, and scatters to the winds the exhalations of a thousand herbs. There are other districts, where the hard and compact gravel would do honour to a lady's shrubbery: in these regions you meet with dwarf trees, and long ridges of low bare rocks of fantastic configuration, along whose base you find the yellow partridge and the black-eyed gazelle.'

[1] 'Neither have ye sought that which was lost' (Ezek. xxxiv. 4).

[2] Augustine presses this (*Enarr. in Ps.* lxxvii. 19): 'The lost sheep returns, but not in its own strength, but brought back on the shoulders of the shepherd. It was able to lose itself as it wandered at will, but it could not find itself, nor would it be found at all were it not sought for by the shepherd's compassion. Nor have we a contrary example to this case of the sheep in the son, who said when he returned unto himself, I will arise and go to my father. For he also was sought and recovered

God was a girding of Himself for such a task as this; his whole life in the days of his flesh a following of the strayed. And He was not weary with the greatness of the way; He shrank not when the thorns wounded his flesh and tore his feet; He followed us into the deep of our misery, came under the uttermost of our malediction; for He had gone forth to seek his own, '*till he had found it*.' And, '*when he hath found it*,' how tenderly does the shepherd of the parable handle that sheep which has cost him all this toil; he does not smite, nor even harshly *drive* it back to the fold; nay, does not deliver it to an underling to carry; but '*layeth it on his* [*own*] *shoulders*,'—a delicate touch, which our Translation has let go,—and bears it home (cf. Deut. xxxii. 10). We recognize in this an image of the sustaining grace of Christ, which does not cease, till his rescued are made partakers of final salvation. But when some make much of the weariness which this load must have caused to the shepherd, seeing here an allusion to his sufferings, 'who bare our sins in his own body'[1] (1 Pet. ii. 24), upon whom was laid 'the iniquity of us all,' this is a missing of the true significance. That '*until he find it*' has exhausted the whole story of the painfulness of his way who came in search of his lost creature; and this is now the story of his triumphant return[2] to heaven with the trophy that He had won, the spoil which He, a mightier David, had delivered from the lion and the bear (1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35).[3]

by a secret call and inspiration, and by none other than by him by whom all things are quickened: for by whom was he found save by him who went forth to save and to seek that which was lost?'

[1] Cajetan: 'The placing the sheep on his shoulders is the redemption of the human race in his own body, and because He did this willingly, He is therefore described as rejoicing.' Melanchthon: 'Inwoven in the text there is a sweet signification of the passion of Christ: He places upon his shoulders the sheep He has found, that is, He transfers to himself the burden of us.'

[2] Gregory the Great (*Hom.* 34 *in Evang.*): 'When the sheep is found he returns to his home, because our Shepherd when He had recovered man returned to the heavenly kingdom.'

[3] The lines of Prudentius (*Hymn. post Jejun.*) have much beauty:

And as the man when he reaches home '*calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me;*[1] *for I have found my sheep which was lost*'—makes them sharers in his joy, as they had been sharers in his anxiety, even so shall joy be in heaven when one wanderer is brought back to the heavenly fold; for heaven and redeemed earth constitute but one kingdom, being bound together by that love which

Ille ovem morbo residem gregique
Perditam sano, male dissipantem
Vellus affixis vepribus per hirtæ
Devia silvæ
Impiger pastor revocat, lupisque
Gestat exclusis, humeros gravatus;
Inde purgatam revehens aprico
Reddit ovili,
Reddit et pratis viridique campo,
Vibrat impexis ubi nulla lappis
Spina, nec germen sudibus perarmat
Carduus horrens:
Sed frequens palmis nemus, et reflexa
Vernat herbarum coma, tum perennis
Gurgitem vivis vitreum fluentis
Laurus obumbrat.

'When faints the lamb with pain out-worn
Straying through wild and devious track,
Rending his fleece in every thorn—
The shepherd brings him back;
He bears him from the wolf afar,
On arm unwearied doth uphold;
The wounded heals, and brings with care
Back to the sunny fold;
Back to sweet fields and meadows green,
Where no dark thorn may point its spear,
Where no tall thistle intervene
Its panoply austere;
Back to the palm-grove and the glade,
Where the spring flowers are blooming bright,
And where the laurel its green shade
Glasses in waves of light.'—*Anon.*

[1] Gregory the Great (*Hom.* 34 *in Evang.*): 'He saith not, Rejoice with the sheep that is found, but rejoice with *me*; because our life is his joy, and when we are brought back to heaven we complete the solemnity of his joy.'

is 'the bond of perfectness.' '*I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.*' Let us not in this '*I say unto you,*' miss a slight yet majestic intimation of the dignity of his person; 'I who know—I who, when I tell you of heavenly things, tell you of mine own (John i. 51; iii. 11), announce to you this.' The joy, we may observe, is still in the future; '*joy shall be in heaven*;' and this consistently with the tacit assumption of the Good Shepherd's part as his own; for not yet had He risen and ascended, leading 'captivity captive,' bringing with Him his rescued and redeemed.

Were this all, there would be nothing to perplex; but it is not merely joy over one penitent, but joy over this one '*more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance,*' that is asserted here. Now we can easily understand how, *among men*, there should be more joy for a small part which has been in jeopardy, than for the continued secure possession of a much larger portion. It is as when the mother concentrates for the moment all her affection on her sick child, seeming to a bystander to love none but that only; and actually rejoicing at the recovery of that one more than at the uninterrupted health of all the others. Or, to use Augustine's beautiful words,[1] 'What then takes place in the soul, when it is more delighted at finding or recovering the things it loves, than if it had ever had them? Yea, and other things witness hereunto, and all things are full of witnesses, crying out, "So it is." The conquering commander triumpheth; yet had he not conquered, unless he had fought, and the more peril there was in the battle, so much the more joy is there in the triumph. The storm tosses the sailors, threatens shipwreck; all wax pale at approaching death; sky and sea are calmed, and they are exceeding joyed, as having been exceeding afraid. A friend is sick, and his pulse threatens danger; all who long for his recovery are sick in mind with him. He is restored, though as yet he walks not

[1] *Confessions*, iii. 3.

with his former strength, yet there is such joy as was not when before he walked sound and strong.'[1] Yet whence arises the disproportionate joy? Clearly from the temporary uncertainty which existed about the result. But no such uncertainty could find place with Him, who knows the end from the beginning; whose joy needs not to be enhanced by a grief and fear going before. As little with Him need the earnest love for the perilled one, as in the case of the mother and her children, throw into the background, even for the moment, the love and care for the others; so that the analogies and illustrations drawn from this world of ours supply no adequate solution of the difficulty.

And further, how can it be affirmed of any that they '*need no repentance*,' since '*all* like sheep have gone astray;' and all therefore have need to try back their ways? the explanations commonly given do not quite satisfy.[2] We may indeed get rid both of this difficulty and the other, by seeing here an example of the Lord's severe yet loving irony. These '*ninety and nine, which need no repentance*,' would then be,—like those whole who need not, or count that they need not, a

[1] Thus too St. Bernard (*In Cant. Serm.* 29): 'I know not how it is, but I feel drawn with more tenderness to those who after reproofs and by means of reproof have at length recovered from weakness, than to those who have remained strong from the beginning without any need of such medicine,'—words the more valuable to illustrate the text, as not spoken with reference to it.

[2] As for instance that by Grotius: 'Who from the whole character of their life have no need to quit home;' and by Calvin: 'The term penitence is specifically restricted to the conversion of those who, after a complete estrangement from God, rise again as if from death to life. For otherwise the whole of life must be the subject of continual penitential meditation, nor is any one exempt from this necessity, since each man's own vices urge him to daily improvement.'—The suggestion of some that the ninety-nine who need no repentance signify the whole unfallen creation, the world of angels, is nothing worth. 'These,' says Theophylact, not, however, adopting the interpretation (φασίν τινες), 'the Good Shepherd left in the wilderness, that is, in the higher heavenly places, for heaven is this wilderness, being sequestered from all worldly tumult, and fulfilled with all tranquillity and peace,' and came to seek the wandering and lost human nature.

physician (Matt. ix. 12),—self-righteous persons; as such displeasing to God; whose present moral condition as it causes *no* joy in heaven, it can be nothing strange that a sinner's conversion should occasion more gladness there than the continuance of these in their evil. But the whole structure and course of the parables refutes this. The ninety and nine sheep have *not* wandered, the nine pieces of money have *not* been lost, the elder brother has *not* left his father's house. These difficulties will only disappear when we regard these '*righteous*' as such indeed, but their righteousness as merely legal, of the old dispensation, so that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than they. The law had partially accomplished its work in them, restraining from grosser transgressions; and thus they needed not, like the publicans and sinners, repentance from these; but it had not accomplished all, it had not been 'a schoolmaster to Christ,' bringing them to see their sinfulness, and consequent need of a Saviour. The publicans and sinners, though by another path, had come to Him; and He here pronounces that there was more real cause of joy over one of these,[1] now entering into the inner sanctuary of faith, than over ninety and nine of those other, who lingered at the legal vestibule, refusing to go further in.[2]

[1] Here the illustration of Gregory the Great may fitly be applied: 'In a battle a captain feels more affection for the soldier who turns again from flight and bravely presses on the enemy, than for him who never showed his back and never did any brave deed.' And Anselm (*Hom.* 12): 'There are some just persons who, although they live just lives and keep themselves from things unlawful, yet never work any great deeds of good. Again, there are others who at first have lived worldly and criminal lives, but who afterwards return unto their heart, considering with themselves that they have acted wrongfully; these pricked with their grief are inflamed with love for God, practise themselves in great virtues, seek out the posts of peril in the holy contest, and forsake all the allurements of the world; and because they perceive that they have wandered away from God, make up for their former losses by ensuing gains.' Compare Jeremy Taylor, *Life of Christ*, part iii. § 16, no. 12.

[2] On no image did the early Church dwell with more fondness than this (see Tertullian, *De Pudic.* 7); as witness the many gems, seals, fragments of glass, and other relics, which have reached us, on which Christ

is thus portrayed. It is frequent also in bas-reliefs on sarcophagi, and paintings in the catacombs. Sometimes other sheep are at his feet, generally two, looking up with pleasure at Him and his burden; in his right hand He most often holds the seven-reeded pipe of Pan, symbol of the attractions of divine love, while with his left He steadies the burden which He bears. Sometimes He is sitting down, as weary with the greatness of the way. This representation always occupies the place of honour, the centre of the vault or tomb (see Münter, *Sinnbilder der Alt. Christ.* vol. i. pp. 60–65; Bosio, *Rom. Sotterr.* pp. 339, 348, 349, 351, 373, 383, 387; Didron, *Iconogr. Chrétienne*, p. 346).

PARABLE XXIII.

THE LOST PIECE OF MONEY.

LUKE xv. 8–10.

THE preceding parable has anticipated much that might have been said upon this; yet it would be against all analogy of other twin parables, to assume that the two did no more than say the same thing twice over. In the Pearl and the Hid Treasure, in the Leaven and the Mustard-seed, the second may seem at first sight only a repetition of the first; while yet on closer inspection important differences will reveal themselves; and so is it both here and elsewhere. Thus compare Matt. ix. 16, 17, and Luke xiv. 28–32. If the shepherd in the last parable was Christ, the woman in this may be the Church.[1] Or should we understand by her that Divine Wisdom,[2] so often magnified in Proverbs as seeking the salvation of men, and here set forth as a person and not an attribute (cf. Matt. xi. 19), this will be no different view. The two explanations flow into one, if only we contemplate the Church as the organ by which the Holy Spirit seeks for the lost; and which, being quickened by the Divine Spirit, is stirred up to active ministries of love for the seeking of souls (Rev. xxii. 17). That the Church should be personified as a woman is natural; and the thought of the Holy Ghost as a

[1] Ambrose: 'Who are these, the father, the shepherd, and the woman? Is not God the father, Christ the shepherd, the Church the woman?'

[2] Gregory the Great (*Hom. 34 in Evang.*): 'For He himself is God, and He also is the Wisdom of God.'

mother has at different times been near to the minds of men.[1]

'*Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep*[2] *the house, and seek diligently till she find it?*' In this piece of money expositors, both ancient and modern, have delighted to trace a resemblance to the human soul, originally stamped with the image and superscription of the great King[3] ('God created man in his own image,' Gen. i. 27), and still retaining traces of the mint from which it proceeded; however by sin that image has been nearly effaced, and the superscription become well-nigh illegible. One clings with pleasure to so instructive a suggestion; but it must not be forgotten that the Greek drachma, the coin here named, had not, like the Latin denarius (Matt. xxii. 20), the emperor's image and superscription upon it, but some device, as of an owl, a tortoise, or a head of

[1] See some interesting remarks in Jerome (*Comm. in Esai.* xl. 3, p. 303), justifying this language; while at the same time he guards it, saying: 'In divinity there is no sex.' Christ claims too for himself the mother's heart in his affecting words, Luke xiii. 34.

[2] An erroneous reading, *evertit*, for *everrit*, had possession of the Vulgate during the Middle Ages. Thus Gregory the Great (*Hom.* 34 *in Evang.*): 'The house is *turned upside down* when the human conscience is troubled by the thought of its guilt.' Thauler: God searches for man, and turns his house upside down, even as we are wont in seeking for anything to turn everything over and move it from its place, until we happen to find that which we seek.' Wiclif: '*Turneth up so down* the house.' There is an allusion to this erroneous reading in Jeremy Taylor's great *Sermon to the University of Dublin*: 'We talk much of reformation, and (blessed be God) once we have felt the good of it; but of late we have smarted under the name and pretension. The woman that had lost her groat *everrit domum*, not *evertit*, she swept the house, she did not turn the house out of doors. That was but an ill reformation that untiled the roof, and broke the walls, and was digging down the foundation.'

[3] Thus Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* cxxxviii.): 'The Wisdom of God had lost a piece of silver. What was the piece of silver? It was a coin upon which was the image of our Emperor.' Compare Ignatius (*Ad. Magn.* 5): 'There are two coinages, the one of God, the other of the world, and each of them has impressed upon it its proper stamp, the faithless the stamp of this world, the faithful and loving the stamp of God the Father through Jesus Christ.'

Minerva. As the woman seeks anxiously her piece of silver, even so the Lord, through the ministrations of his Church, gives diligence to recover the lost sinner, to bring back the money of God to his treasury, from which originally it issued.[1] The allusion often found in the lighting of the candle to the mystery of the Incarnation,—the divine glory which the Saviour has within, shining through the fleshly covering which only in part concealed it,[2]—must of course give way, if we interpret the parable as is here proposed. Rather it must be explained by the help of such hints as Matt. v. 14, 15; Phil. ii. 15, 16; Ephes. v. 13, supply. The '*candle*' is the Word of God; which candle the Church holds forth, as it has and exercises a ministry of this Word. It is by the light of this candle that sinners are found, that they find themselves, that the Church finds them.[3] With this to aid her, she '*sweeps the house;*' which sweeping is not effected without dust.[4] What an unsettling of the house for a time! how does the dust which had been suffered to settle down and to accumulate begin to rise and fly about; how unwelcome all which is going forward to any, who have no interest in what is doing, whose only interest is that their selfish ease should not be disturbed. The charge against the Gospel is still the same,

[1] H. de Sto. Victore: 'The piece of silver is found when the likeness of his creator is renewed in a man;' and Bernard (*De Grat. et Lib. Arb.* 10): 'To this day the image would have lain foul and disfigured had not that evangelical woman lighted her candle, that is had not Wisdom appeared in the flesh, had she not swept the house, the house that is of vice, and sought the piece which she had lost, even her own image, which, robbed of its native splendour, and besmirched beneath its coat of sin, was lying hid as in the dust; had she not wiped it when found, and taking it from the region of unlikeness, restored it to its pristine appearance, and made it like in the glory of the saints, nay had she not rendered it conformable in all respects to herself, in plain fulfilment of that Scripture: For we know that when He shall appear we shall be like unto him; for we shall see him as He is.'

[2] Cajetan: 'The candle which she lights is the mystery of the Incarnation, the Word in the flesh, even, as light in a pitcher.'

[3] Tertullian (*De Pudic.* 7): 'The piece of silver is found by the light of a candle, as if by the word of God.'

[4] 'It is not brought about without dust,' as Bengel well remarks.

that it turns the world upside down (Acts xvii. 6). And in a sense so it does; for only let its message be proclaimed in earnest, and how much of latent aversion to the truth reveals itself now as open enmity; how much of torpid estrangement from God is changed into active hostility; what indignation is there against the troublers of Israel, the witnesses in sackcloth who torment the dwellers upon earth (Rev. xi. 10). She meanwhile who bears the candle of the Lord, amid all this uproar and outcry is diligently looking for and finding her own again.

In the preceding parable the shepherd sought his strayed sheep *in the wilderness*; but *in the house* this piece of money is lost, and in the house therefore it is sought and found.[1] This is scarcely accidental. In that other there was the returning of the Son to the heavenly places, but in this there

[1] The stopped wells of Gen. xxi. 18 are for Origen the springs of eternal life, which the Philistines, that is Satan and sin, had choked, but which our Isaac, the Son of gladness, opened anew for us. Such choked wells, he observes, are within every one of us (cf. John iv. 14), and he bids us note that in this parable the lost money was not found *without* the house, but *within*: for at the bottom of every man's soul there is this image of God, mislaid indeed and overlaid with a thousand other images, covered with dust and defilement, but which still may be found, and, in his hands from whom it came, may recover its first brightness, and distinct outline (*In Gen. Hom.* 13): 'The woman who had lost the piece of silver did not find it out of doors, but in her house, after that she had lit a candle, and purified the house from the filth and impurities, which long-continued idleness and sluggardy had accumulated; and there she found the silver. So also then if thou lightest a candle, if thou bringest to thyself the illumination of the Holy Spirit, and in his light wilt see the light, thou too shalt find the piece of silver within thee. For when at the beginning God was making man, He made him after his own image and likeness: and this image he placed not outside of but within him. But this could not be seen in thee so long as thy house was dirty, filled with impurities and rubbish. The fountain of knowledge was placed within thee, but it could not flow, because the Philistines had choked it with earth, and had made in thee an image of the earthly. Then thou didst carry within thee the image of the earthly, but now that thou hast heard these things and by the Word of God art purged from all that earthly weight and oppression, see that thou make the image of the heavenly that is in thee to shine forth in splendour.'

is the hint of a visible Church which has been founded upon earth, and to which sinners are restored. And there are other slighter variations, intelligible at once when we see there the more personal and immediate ministry of Christ, and here the secondary ministry of his Church. The shepherd says, '*I have found my sheep;*' but the woman, '*I have found the piece of money;*' not '*my piece of money*,' for it is in no sense *hers*, as the sheep was *his*. He says, '*which was lost;*' but she, '*which I had lost*,' acknowledging a fault of her own as having contributed to the loss; for a sheep strays of itself, but a piece of money could only be missing by a certain negligence on the part of such as should have kept it.

This woman, if we are right in our interpretation, is the Church, the bride, that is, of the Good Shepherd. What wonder that in the hour of her joy she does and speaks, almost as He has done and spoken before? And first, '*she calleth her friends and neighbours together*;' — they are *female* friends and neighbours, although this nicety in the keeping of the parts (Ruth iv. 14, 17)[1] escapes us in English[2] —that these may be sharers in her joy. Yet this need not prevent us from understanding by them the angels,—we have the Lord's warrant for this,—whose place, it will be observed, is not 'in heaven' in this parable, as it was in the preceding; for this is the rejoicing together of the redeemed and elect creation *upon earth* at the repentance of a sinner. Among the angels who walk up and down the earth, who are present in the assemblies of the faithful (1 Cor. xi. 10), joying to behold their order, but most of all rejoicing when a sinner is converted, there shall be joy, when the Church of the redeemed, quickened by the Holy Spirit, summons them to join with it in consenting hymns of thanksgiving to God for the recovery of a lost soul. For indeed if the 'sons of God'

[1] With the same nice observance of proprieties, Wisdom, a female personification, sends forth not her servants, but her maidens (Prov. ix. 3).

[2] Wiclif has, but he does not here use, the words 'friendess' (Prov. vii. 4); and 'neighbouress' (Exod. iii. 22).

shouted for joy and sang together at the first creation (Job xxxviii. 7), by how much better right when 'a new creation' had found place, in the birth of a soul into the light of everlasting life (Ephes. iii. 10; 1 Pet. i. 12); for according to that exquisite word of St. Bernard, the tears of penitents are the wine of angels.[1]

[1] 'The tears of penitents make angels' wine;' and Prudentius:

Amissa drachma regio — Et gemma, deterso luto,
Recondita est ærario, — Nitore vincit sidera.

'The coin, once lost, henceforth shall lie
Stored in the royal treasury;
The jewel, from its stains washed clean,
Shines with a more than heavenly sheen.'

PARABLE XXIV.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

LUKE xv. 11–32.

WE proceed to consider a parable which, if it be permitted to compare things divine with each other, may be fitly called the pearl and crown of all the parables ;[1] as further, it is the most *elaborate*, if we may use a word having a certain unfitness when applied to the spontaneous and the free, but which yet the fulness of all the minor details suggests ;—a parable too, containing within itself such a circle of blessed truths as abundantly to justify the title, *Evangelium in Evangelio*, which it has sometimes borne. Of its relation to the two other in the same chapter there has been occasion to speak already. To the parable itself, therefore, we may address ourselves without further preface.

'*And he said*,'—these words mark a new departure—'*A certain man had two sons*.' Interpreters separate off into two groups at the very outset of their interpretation. There are who see in these two sons the Jew and the Gentile ; and therefore in the younger son's departure from his father's house, the history of the great apostasy of the Gentile world ; in his return the reception of the same into the privileges of the New Covenant ;—as in the elder son a figure of the narrow-hearted self-extolling Jews, repining that 'sinners of the Gentiles' should be admitted to the same privileges with themselves. and sullenly refusing blessings which they must

[1] Grotius : 'Amid all the parables of Christ this one surely is remarkable, as full of feeling, and painted with the fairest colours.'

possess in common with these. Others, on the contrary, recognize in the two sons not Gentile and Jew, at least not primarily these, but penitent sinners and proud sinners, wheresoever such may be met; and have naturally found the first example of the one in the publicans, of the other in the Pharisees, seeing that the Lord spake the parable to justify to these his gracious reception of those.

These latter interpreters with good right object to the other interpretation, that it is alien to the scope of the parable; which, so explained, fails to meet the necessity which called it out, or to teach, except by remote inference, the truth which Christ plainly intended to teach by it. He would fain put the Pharisees to a wholesome shame, offended as with Him they were for consorting so freely and so graciously with fallen members of the Jewish Church. If indeed '*the publicans and sinners*' whom He so freely admitted to hear Him had been Gentiles and not Jews, the other interpretation might have some claim to stand. A setting forth of the gracious reception by his heavenly Father of the whole Gentile world when it turned to Him, would in that case have been a proper justification of his own receiving of those who might be properly regarded as the first-fruits of the heathen. Some have very eagerly asserted that the '*publicans and sinners*' *were* heathen; Tertullian, for example, who is in great dread lest, if they be acknowledged as members, though fallen ones, of the Jewish Church, an argument should be drawn from this for receiving back into communion those who, within the Church, and after their baptism, have greatly sinned. He does not scruple to assert that the publicans were always heathen; and this in the face of our Lord's declaration that Zacchæus, a chief publican, was 'a son of Abraham'[1] (Luke xix. 9), of the fact that Matthew the Apostle had sat as a publican at the receipt of custom (Luke v. 27), that publicans came to the

[1] This is not decisive with him; for of him he says (*Adv. Marc.* iv. 37): Zaccheus, 'although perhaps an alien, was yet possessed of some knowledge of the scriptures from his dealings with the Jews.'

baptism of John (Luke vii. 29).[1] Set by their fellow-countrymen on a level with the heathen, counted traitors by them to the dearest interests of the nation, and till the words of Christ awoke them to a nobler life, many of them, perhaps, deserving all, or nearly all, the scorn which they found, the publicans were yet beyond all question Jews;[2] which being so, we confidently conclude that we have not here the mystery of the calling of the Gentiles into the covenant; whereof during his earthly life the Lord gave only slightest hints; but a truth as precious, namely, that, *within the covenant*, He was come to call and to receive sinners to repentance. For all this the interpretation, which must thus be disallowed as the primary, need not be excluded altogether. Wherever there are penitent sinners and proud sinners, there the parable is finding its fulfilment; and thus in a very real sense the Gentile world *was* the prodigal younger son, and the Jewish synagogue the self-righteous elder. Nor have they by

[1] See also Lightfoot, *Hor. Heb.* on Matt. v. 46.

[2] Many proofs of this are urged by Jerome (*Ep.* 21, *ad Damasum*), who marvels at the audacity of Tertullian's denial. The great aim of the latter in his treatise *De Pudicitiâ*, 7–9 (written after he had forsaken the Catholic Church), is to prove that nothing in this parable applies to those who, after baptism, have grievously sinned; and in his passionate eagerness to prove this, he does not hesitate to affirm its occasion to have been, 'because the Pharisees were murmuring at the Lord for receiving publicans and sinners of *the Gentiles*.' His fear is lest sinners should be overbold in their sin, having hope, like the prodigal, to find grace, whenever they will seek it; and he asks, 'Who will fear to squander what he can afterwards recover? Who will care always to keep what he is not in danger of always losing?' But how little was he really promoting holiness in this his false zeal for it. Tell men after they have sinned grievously, that there is for them no hope of pardon, or, which amounts to nearly the same thing, give them only a dim uncertain distant hope of it, and for one whom you may thus hinder from squandering his goodly heritage, you will hinder ten thousand, who have discovered the wretchedness of a life apart from God, from casting themselves on the riches of his mercy, and henceforth living, not to the lusts of men, but to his will. Not thus Chrysostom, *Ad Theod. Laps.* i. 7; *De Pœnit. Hom.* i. 4, where among other things he says: 'This son, therefore, is the type of those who fall after baptism,' which he proceeds to prove. Compare Ambrose (*De Pœnit.* ii. 3), as against the Novatianists.

any means exhausted the parable. It stands good also for us. In the Christian Church too prodigals and elder brothers still exist; and as thousands and ten thousands of those have from it taken heart to return to a heavenly Father's house, so will thousands more to the end of time; whom no perverse, narrow-hearted, 'elder-brotherly' interpretation will succeed in robbing of the strong consolation which it affords.

'*And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me;*' he asks for his 'bairndole,' as they call it in Yorkshire. It is not without a meaning that of the two sons it is the younger who thus enacts the part of the prodigal; 'childhood and youth are vanity;' cf. Prov. vii. 7. This claiming of his share in a technical, almost legal, form,[1] as a right and not as a favour, is a delicate touch, characteristic of the entire estrangement from all home-affections which has already found place in his heart. Such a legal right the Lord *may* intend to intimate that he had; and, no doubt, a custom of the kind existed among some nations of the East, for example, among the Hindoos; but no satisfactory proof has been adduced that it ever prevailed among the Jews.[2] But we *need not* conceive of him as asking his portion otherwise than as a favour: 'That portion which will hereafter fall to me, which thou designest for me at last, I would fain receive it now.' A younger brother's portion, according to the Jewish laws of inheritance, would be the half of that which the elder brother should receive (Deut. xxi. 17; 2 Kin. ii. 9). Contemplated spiritually this request is the expression of man's desire to be independent of God, to become a god to himself (Gen. iii. 5), and to lay out his life at his own will and for his own pleasure.

[1] Τὸ ἐπιβάλλον μέρος τῆς οὐσίας = rata hereditatis pars; the phrase, like so many in St. Luke, is classical and happily selected (see Wetstein, in loc.).

[2] Rosenmüller, *Alte und Neue Morgenl.* vol. v. p. 115. Abraham indeed in his lifetime bestowed the bulk of his possessions on Isaac, at the same time giving gifts to the sons of his concubines, evidently their portions; for with these he sent them away (Gen. xxv. 5, 6). It may have been on his part a wise precaution to avoid disputes after his death.

Growing weary of living upon God's fulness, he desires to be, and believes that he can be, a fountain of blessedness to himself; that, laying out his life for himself, he can make a better investment of it than God would have made for him.[1] This sin of pride is the sin of sins; in which all subsequent sins are included; they are all but the unfolding of this one. Over against the prodigal's demand, '*Give me my portion of goods*,' is the children's cry, 'Give us day by day our daily bread;' they therein declaring that they wait upon God, and would fain be nourished from day to day by his hand.

'*And he divided unto them his living*.' The father does not refuse his request. It would have profited nothing to retain *him* at home against his will, who was already in heart estranged from that home: better that he should discover by bitter experience the folly of his request. Such, too, is the dealing of God; He has constituted man a spiritual being, a being with a will; and when *his* service no longer appears a perfect freedom, and man promises himself something better elsewhere, he is allowed to make the trial (Rom. i. 24, 26, 28).[2] He shall discover, and, if need be, by most painful proof, that the only true freedom is the freedom in God (John viii. 32–34); that to depart from Him is not to throw off the yoke, but to exchange a light yoke for a heavy one, and one gracious master for a thousand tyrannous lords.[3]

'*And not many days after the younger son gathered all together*.' Having obtained his portion, a certain interval of time elapses before he actually forsakes his father's house. It is a fine and delicate touch, the apostasy of the heart, as

[1] St. Bernard observes, that it is a sign of evil augury, when this son 'begins to desire the division of the property which is more sweetly held in common, and to have to himself that which is not decreased by participation, but is lost by division.'

[2] See Chrysostom, *De Pœnit. Hom.* i. 4.

[3] Augustine: 'If thou wilt cleave to the higher, thou shalt tread lower things under foot; but if thou depart from the higher, the lower shall be turned to thy punishment.' Compare the Italian proverb: Chi non vuol servir ad un sol Signor, a molti ha da servir, 'He who will not serve one Lord has to serve many.'

St. Bernard here well observes, often running before the apostasy of the life.[1] The sinner is indeed pleasing himself; but the divergence of his will and God's does not *immediately* appear. This, however, cannot be for long. As the young man in the parable, after a shorter or longer pause, '*gathered all together*,' turned what had fallen to his share into ready money or jewels or other valuables, and then '*took his journey into a far country*,' so '*after not many days*' he too will *openly* depart from God, who in will and affections has departed from Him already. Gathering all together, collecting all his energies and powers, with the deliberate resolve of obtaining, through their help, all the gratification he can out of the world,[2] and now manifestly preferring the creature to the Creator, he will take '*his journey into a far country*,'[3] even into that land where God is not.

And now it must be well with him at last; he has gotten what he desired; no other is lord over him. Henceforth he is his own master;—but only to find the truth of that line which the poet wrote, and to which so many, he himself included, have set their seal:

'Lord of himself; that heritage of woe!'

Nor shall he wait long before he makes proof of this. For in that far land the Prodigal,—fitly so called by the Church,[4]

[1] *De Divers. Serm.* 8: 'A man is still under his own control, whilst fulfilling his own pleasure, but not yet possessed by vices and sins. But now he sets forth for a far country, and is no longer merely separated from his father, but at a distance from him.'

[2] Cajetan: 'The gathering together of his goods is man's confidence in all his gifts of nature and grace, of soul and body.'

[3] Augustine: 'The far country is forgetfulness of God.' Bede: 'A man is removed afar from God, not by regions but by his feelings.'

[4] Ὁ υἱὸς ἄσωτος. The title, however, lies wrapped up in the ζῶν ἀσώτως of ver. 13; and has its fitness, ἄσωτος being in the best Greek the constant epithet given to a son who squanders his patrimony (see Wetstein, in loc.). It nowhere occurs in the New Testament, in the Septuagint only at Prov. vii. 11; but ἀσωτία three times (Ephes. v. 18; Tit. i. 6; 1 Pet. iv. 4). The ἄσωτος is the *prodigus* or the *perditus* according as we give the word an active or a passive force. Most give it the active, deriving from ἀ and σώζειν, he who does not spare, the

though he nowhere bears this name in the sacred narrative,—'*wasted his substance with riotous living*' (compare Prov. xxix. 3); so quickly has his *gathering* issued in a *scattering*, so little was it a *gathering* that deserved the name. For a while the supplies he brought with him may have lasted; and so long he may have congratulated himself, and counted that he had done wisely and well in asserting his own liberty. But anon, '*when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want*,'[1] the famine reached

scatterling, who counts that he may squander for ever without having squandered all. So Aristotle, the word forming part of his ethical terminology, the ἄσωτος, spendthrift or dingthrift, being set over against the ἀνελεύθερος, or niggard; these two occupying the two extremes, remote alike from a true liberality (*Eth. Nicom.* iv. 1, passim). So too Chrysostom: ἄσωτος, οὐ γὰρ σώζει, ἀλλ' ἀπόλλυσιν, and Theophylact, who makes ἀσωτία = ἄμετρος χρῆσις (Suicer s. v.). But for others ἄσωτος is passive, and = ἄσωστος, *i. e.* σώζεσθαι μὴ δυνάμενος, a word prophetic of his doom who bears it; he is one of the 'hopelosts,' a word which might very well be recovered. So Clement of Alexandria (*Pæd.* ii. 1) and Plutarch (*Alcib.* 3); so too Grotius: 'The class of men who are so sunk in vice that their salvation is despaired of;' here too, as so often, the heathen ethical terminology saying more than it meant or knew. We must not restrain ἀσωτία on the one side to intemperance and excess at the table, as Grotius too much has done; in this sense Cicero (*De Fin.* ii. 8) has latinized asotus; nor yet on the other to fleshly lusts and impurities. It signifies reckless profligate living in its widest extent. In the *Tabula* of Cebes, c. 11, Ἀσωτία, as one of the tempting courtezans, keeps company with Ἀκρασία, Ἀπληστία, and Κολακεία. C. Deyling, *Obss. Sac.* vol. iii. p. 435, and my *Synonyms of the New Testament*, § 16.

[1] The Vulgate has not missed the force of the αὐτός: Et *ipse* cœpit egere (see Winer, *Gramm.* § xxii. 4). Godet here says excellently well: 'Freedom of enjoyment is not unlimited, as the sinner delights to imagine: it has two sorts of limits, the one touching the individual himself, such as the disgust, the remorse, the feeling of destitution and abjectness which results from vice (the 'when he had spent all'); the others, such as proceed from the unfavourableness of certain external circumstances, represented here by the famine which comes at this crisis: such are the domestic or public calamities which finally break the already burdened heart; lastly, the deprivation of all divine consolation. Only let these two causes of misfortune happen to come together, and misery is at its height. Then ensues what Jesus calls ὑστερεῖσθαι, *the being in want*, the absolute void of a heart which has sacrificed everything to pleasure, and to which nothing remains but suffering.'

even to him (Prov. vi. 26). What a picture of the downward progress of a soul that has estranged itself from the one source of happiness and joy. It is not at the first moment that the wretchedness of this is discovered. The world has its attractions, and the flesh its pleasures; the affections are not all at once laid waste, nor the springs of natural delight drawn dry in an instant. But to this spiritual bankruptcy the sinner is more or less rapidly hastening; and the time inevitably arrives when he comes to an end of all the satisfaction which the creature can give him; and he too finds out that there is '*a mighty famine*'[1] in the land where he has chosen to dwell,[2]—a famine of truth and love, and of all whereby the spirit of man indeed lives; that it is an evil thing and bitter to have forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewn out for himself broken cisterns which hold no water (Jer. ii. 13; xvii. 5, 6, 13). There need no outward distresses, though often these will not be wanting, to bring on a sense of this famine. A man's worldly possessions may stand in their fulness, may go on abounding more and more; all his external helps to felicity may remain in their strength; while yet in the true riches he may have run through all, and may be beginning '*to be in want.*'[3] The famine of which Christ

[1] Λιμὸς ἰσχυρά = λιμὸς σκληρά (Isai. viii. 21); λιμὸς κραταιός (1 Kin. xviii. 2); λιμὸς μέγας (2 Kin. vi. 25; Luke iv. 25); λιμὸς στενός (Job xviii. 12).

[2] Ambrose (*Exp. in Luc.* vii. 215): 'For he who departs from the word of God hungers, because man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God: he who departs from the fountain, thirsts; he who departs from the treasure-house is in need; he who departs from wisdom, becomes dull; he who departs from virtue, is ruined.'

[3] Thus, when a great English poet, with everything that fortune and rank and genius could give him,—and who had laid out his whole life for pleasure, and not for duty,—yet having hardly reached half the allotted period of man, already exclaimed,

> 'My days are in the yellow leaf;
> The flowers, the fruits of love are gone;
> The worm, the canker, and the grief,
> Are mine alone——'

what are these deeply affecting words, but the confession of one who,

here speaks presides often at the sumptuous tables of rich men; it finds its way into the palaces of kings. In these palaces, at those tables, the immortal soul may be famishing, yea, ready to '*perish with hunger*;' yea and often has so done.

It was observed just now that we had a right to trace, as a secondary meaning in this parable, the history of the apostasy of the Gentile world from the knowledge and service of the true God. Regard it in that sense, and then this wasting of goods will be exactly described at Rom. i. 19–23; what remains in that chapter corresponding to the prodigal's joining of himself to a citizen of the far country, and seeking to fill his belly with the husks of the swine. The great famine of the heathen world was at its height when the Son of God came in the flesh: therein consisted in part 'the fulness of time,' the fitness of that time, above all other, for his appearing. The glory of that old world was fast fading and perishing. All child-like faith in the old religions had departed; 'creeds outworn,' they could no longer nourish, ever so little, the spirit of man. The Greek philosophy had completed its possible circle, but it had found no sufficient answer to the doubts and questionings which tormented humanity. 'What is truth?' this was the question which all asked; some in mockery, some in despair; some without the desire, and all without the expectation, of obtaining an answer.

When the prodigal '*began to be in want*,' there was here a summons to return to the home which he had forsaken. But his proud heart is not yet subdued, his confidence in his own resources, however shaken, not altogether overthrown. God's first judgments do not always tame; but, like Ephraim,

having spent all, had found himself in want? The prodigal's misery, his sense of the barrenness of sin, finds presently a yet deeper voice:

'The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle;
No torch is kindled at its blaze,
A funeral pile!'

the stricken sinner exclaims, 'The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stone; the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars' (Isai. ix. 10; lvii. 10; cf. Jer. v. 3; Amos iv. 6–10; Rev. xvi. 10, 11). In such a spirit as this '*he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country*,'—'fastened' or 'pinned himself upon' him, as Hammond expresses it, hoping to repair his broken fortunes by his help[1] (Jer. ii. 36; Hos. v. 13; 1 Sam. ii. 5). 'That citizen,' says St. Bernard, 'I cannot understand as other than one of the malignant spirits, who, sinning with an irremediable obstinacy, and having passed into a permanent disposition of malice and wickedness, are no longer guests and strangers, but citizens and abiders in the land of sin.' But may not this term bring out the deep distinction between the prodigal and the lord to whom he addicted himself for a while? With all his guilt, *he* was not '*a citizen*,' but a stranger, in that '*far land*.' He did not feel himself at home, nor naturalize himself there. The other was well to do; the famine had not touched him; herein how far more miserable, though he knew it not, than he who '*began to be in want*.' There is hope for him who feels himself a miserable alien in the land of sin: but what hope for one who has made himself '*a citizen*' there, who is troubled with no heavenly homesickness, no divine hypochondria, no remembrances of a Father's house which he has forsaken? For the present indeed there is set forth to us here a deeper depth in the sinner's downward course, a fall within a fall,—a more entire and self-conscious yielding of himself in heart and will to the service of evil. He sells himself to the world; the poor deceitful show of being its master has disappeared; he is evidently its slave. A hint is here of that awful mystery in the downward

[1] So Unger: '*Ἐκολλήθη* contemptuously, he thrust himself upon;' see Suicer, *Thes.* s. v. *κολλάομαι*. Keil puts a little more into the word than to me it seems to contain, when he explains: '*Ἐκολλήθη* points to the fact that the citizen of that country did not wish to receive him into his service, but that he had first to abandon himself to pressing entreaty.' But the same use of hærere, adhærere, without any such emphasis, is common in Latin.

progress of souls, by which he who begins with using the world as a servant to minister to his pleasures, must submit in the end to a reversing of the relations between them, so that the world uses him as its drudge, and sin as its slave. He becomes cheap in the esteem of that very world, in whose service he has forfeited all. Its good wine, which it offered him at the first, it offers him no longer, but, now that he has well drunk, that which is worse [1] (John ii. 10). It rejects him, as the sea after a while rejects the carcasses which itself has swallowed up. There is a hint of something like this, Ezek. xxiii. 22.

Bankrupt now in all, it is little pity which he finds from the new master on whom he has thrust himself; and who, if he must needs engage one who so crouches to him for a morsel of bread, will yet put him far off and dismiss out of sight. '*He sent him into his fields to feed swine*,' put him to an employment than which in the eyes of a Jew, there could be none viler nor more degrading.[2] And now '*he would fain have filled his belly with the husks*[3] *that the*

[1] *De Divers. Serm.* 8. Theophylact: 'When he had advanced in wickedness.' Cajetan: 'He submitted himself wholly to the devil, who truly is a citizen of the country of sin.'

[2] Lightfoot, *Hor. Heb.* on Matt. viii. 30; Gfrörer, *Urchristenthum*, vol. i. p. 115. Herodotus (ii. 47) describes the swineherds as the only persons excluded from the temples in Egypt.

[3] These κεράτια are not so much the husks of some other fruit, as themselves the fruit of the carob tree (κερατωνία), called 'St. John's bread-tree,' from the tradition that the Baptist fed on its fruit in the wilderness. They are common in South Italy, in Spain, on the northern coasts of Africa, and in the Levant; being sometimes eaten by the very poor, but oftener used for the foddering of cattle. In shape they resemble a bean-pod, though larger, and curved more into the form of a sickle: thence called κεράτιον, or little horn, and the tree sometimes in German, Bockshornbaum. They have a dark hard outside, and a dull sweet taste, hardly justifying Pliny's *prædulces* siliquæ. (See Rosenmüller, *Altes und Neues Morgenland*, vol. v. p. 198; Winer, *Realwört*, s. v. Johannis Brodtbaum; Duschak, *Botanik des Talmud*, 1871, p. 91.) The beans were used for weights, and thus it has fallen out that κεράτιον, after long travels in the East, has come back to us through the Arabic in the form of 'carat.'

swine did eat; and no man gave unto him.' Was it that he looked with a longing eye upon these swine's husks, and that even these were denied him? So commonly;[1] for myself I should rather understand that in his unscrupulous hunger he was glad to '*fill his belly*' with these husks, *and did so*,[2]—no man giving him any nobler sustenance (Prov. xiii. 25). A homely phrase has here been chosen of design;[3] all that these could do for him was just this, to '*fill his belly*,' not to satisfy his hunger;[4] a profound moral truth lying in the words, even this, that God and He only can satisfy the longings of an immortal soul; that none other can fill the heart which was made for Him.[5]

[1] Thus Luther: Und niemand gab *sie* ihm. Bernard (*De Convers.* 8): 'Deservedly did he hunger for husks, *and not receive them*, who preferred to feed swine rather than to eat his fill at his father's table.'

[2] Calvin: 'The meaning is that so great was his hunger that he thought no more of his former delicacies, but greedily devoured the husks; for when he was feeding the swine with this kind of food it was impossible for him to lack it. . . . The reason is added, because *no man gave unto him*, for, in my judgment, the copula should be taken as causal.'

[3] So homely that more than one manuscript, the great Alexandrian for instance, has substituted a more refined—χορτασθῆναι—in its place.

[4] Ambrose (*Exp. in Luc.* vii. 217): 'A food with which the body is not refreshed but filled.' Augustine: 'He fed on husks and was not satisfied.' Stella: 'They do not satisfy man, but only load his belly.' Compare Lucretius: Atque *explere* bonis rebus *satiareque* nunquam ('Filled with good things and never satisfied').

[5] I append some beautiful lines from a poem of Henry Vaughan's, which has not yet found its way into our collections of religious verse, but deserves it well:

'When first my youthful sinful age
Grew master of my ways,
Appointing error for my page,
And darkness for my days;
I flung away, and with full cry
Of wild affections, rid
In post for pleasures, bent to try
All gamesters that would bid.
I played with fire, did counsel spurn,
Made life my common stake:
But never thought that fire could burn,
Or that a soul could ache.'

The whole description is wonderful, and in nothing more than in the intimate connexion wherein his punishment stands to his sin. 'He who would not, as a son, be treated liberally by his father, is compelled to be the servant and bondslave of a foreign master; he who would not be ruled by God, is compelled to serve the devil; he who would not abide in his father's royal palace, is sent to the field among hinds; he who would not dwell among brethren and princes, is obliged to be the servant and companion of brutes; he who would not feed on the bread of angels, petitions in his hunger for the husks of the swine.'[1] In his feeding of swine, what a picture have we of man, 'serving divers lusts and pleasures,' in whom the divine is for the time totally obscured, and the bestial merely predominant: and in his fruitless attempt to fill himself with the husks, of the sinner seeking through the unlimited gratification of his appetites to appease the fierce hunger of his soul. But in vain, for still 'he enlarges his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied.' One might as well hope to quench a fire by adding fuel to it, as to slake desire by gratifying it[2] (Ezek. xvi. 28, 29). And the crowning misery is, that the power of sinful gratifications to stay that hunger even for the moment is ever diminishing,—the pleasure which is even hoped for from them still growing fainter, and yet the goad behind urging to seek that pleasure, still becoming fiercer;—the sense of the horrible nature of the bondage ever increasing, with the power of throwing off that bondage ever growing less.[3] All the monstrous luxuries and

[1] Corn. a Lapide.

[2] Jerome (*Ad Dam. Ep.* xxi. 13): 'He could not satisfy himself, because pleasure ever hungers after itself, and when it is past leaves no sense of fulness;' and Bernard (*De Convers.* 14): 'For it is not abundance but contempt that produces this satiety. So, therefore, ye foolish sons of Adam, in devouring the husks that are the swine's, ye feed not your hungry souls but rather your souls' hunger. By such provender as this only your starvation is nourished, only hunger is fed by unnatural food.'

[3] Cajetan: 'The devils who now possess the man in undisturbed dominion grudge him the satisfaction of his appetite, which yet they used to procure for him until he was fully subjected to themselves.'

frantic wickednesses of imperial Rome show like the last despairing effort of man to appease his hunger with the husks.[1] In this light we may regard the incredibly sumptuous feasts, the golden palaces, the enormous shows and spectacles, and all the pomp and pride of life pushed to the uttermost,[2] the sins of nature, and the sins below nature; while yet from amidst all these the voice of man's misery only made itself the more distinctly heard. The experiment carried out on this largest scale only made the failure more signal, only made more conspicuous proof that from the food of beasts there could not be drawn the nourishment of men.

It might here be urged, that the picture traced in the parable is an exaggeration alike of the wickedness and of the woe even of those who have forsaken God; that, in the corruptest times not all, and in more moral epochs only a few, even of these fall so low in misery and guilt; that their fall in a thousand ways is mercifully broken. This is quite true; yet all might thus fall; by the first departure from God, all this guilt and all this misery are rendered possible; they are legitimate results; which only do not always follow, because God, in his infinite mercy, does not always suffer sin to put forth *all* the bitter fruits which in it as in a bitter root are contained. In the present case, it *is* allowed to put forth its bitterest and its worst; we have one who has debased himself even unto hell; and the parable would have been faulty but for this; it would not have been a parable for *all* sinners; it would have failed to show that there is no extent of departure from God which precludes a return.

Hitherto we have followed the wanderer step by step in a course which is carrying him ever farther and farther from his God. But now the crisis has arrived, the περιπέτεια

[1] Augustine's explanation is not virtually different; the '*husks*' are for him, 'barren doctrines of the world resounding with vanity;' such as had been to himself once his own Manichæan figments. Cf. Jerome (*Ad Dam. Ep.* xxi. 13); and H. de Sto. Victore: 'The mean fictions of poets, and philosophic doctrines stained with various errors.'

[2] See, for instance, Suetonius, *Caligula*, xix. 37.

of this 'Soul's Tragedy;' and a more grateful task remains—to trace the steps of his return, from the first beginnings of repentance to a full re-investiture in all the rights and privileges of a son. For though he has forsaken his God, he has not been forsaken by Him—not in that far land, nor even among the swine's husks; all the misery which has fallen on him being indeed an expression of God's anger against the sin, but at the same time of his love to the sinner. God hedges up his way with thorns, that he may not find his paths (Hos. ii. 6); makes his sin bitter to him, that he may abhor it; pursuing his fugitives, and summoning them back to Himself in that only language which now they will understand.[1] He allows the world to make its bondage hard to them, that they may know the difference between his service and 'the service of the kingdoms of the countries;' and cry to Him, by reason of the bitter bondage (2 Chron. xii. 8; xxxiii. 11–13).[2] On how many, alas! this severe but loving discipline is wasted. They, perhaps, change their yoke, but they do not break it. They betake them to some other citizen of that far country, who promises them a little better fare, or treatment a little less contemptuous. Or, it may be, they learn to dress their husks, that these shall look like human food, and then deny that they are the fodder of swine. Or, glorying in their shame, and wallowing in the same sty with the beasts they feed, they proclaim that there was never meant to be any difference between men and beasts, that the food of one is the food also of the other: 'Gryll will be Gryll, and keeps his hoggish mind.' But this is not so with all. It was not so with him whose story we are following here. Under that discipline of love '*he came to himself*'[3]—words of deepest significance, saying as they do that to come to one's self, and to come to God, are one and the same thing; that when we truly find

[1] Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps.* cxxxviii. 3, 4.

[2] Augustine: 'The stern discipline of the divine compassion.'

[3] Compare Seneca (*Ep.* 53): 'Why does no one confess his sins? Because even now he is beset with them. To recount a dream is the act of one who is awake, and to confess one's sins is a sign of health.' Cf. Lucretius, iv. 994.

ourselves we find Him; or rather having found Him, find also ourselves;[1] for it is not man in union with God, who is raised above the true condition of humanity; but man separated from God, who has fallen out of, and below that condition.

He remembers now his father's house, and all the abundance there: '*How many hired servants*[2] *of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I* [*here*] *perish with hunger!*'[3] There is a touch of truest nature here; for the sinner never so feels the discord which he has introduced into his innermost being, as when he compares himself with the creation, animate and inanimate, around him and beneath him. He sees the happy animals, undisturbed with his longings, unable to stain themselves with his sin; he beholds suns and stars travelling in their appointed paths, and all nature fulfilling the purposes for which it was ordained; everywhere else peace and harmony; he only

> 'a jarring and a dissonant thing
> Amid this general dance and minstrelsy.'

Many too of his fellow-men he sees, who, with no very lofty views about living to the glory of God, with no very lively affections towards Him, do yet find their satisfaction in the discharge of their daily duties; who, though they do his work more in the spirit of servants than of sons, rather looking to their hire than out of the free impulses of love, are not without their reward. It is true, they may fall very short of the highest joy which some of his children know; yet, on the other hand, they are far from the misery and destitution into

[1] Luther: Da schlug er in sich. Augustine, *Serm.* xcvi. 2: 'That he came again to himself, shows that he had gone out of himself.' Repentance is resipiscentia.

[2] The μίσθιοι may be regarded as occupying a lower social position even than the δοῦλοι. The δοῦλος had a certain place in his master's household, and indeed, under the humane conditions of household slavery in the East, an assured and recognized position there; not so the μίσθιος, hired from day to day (Matt. xx. 1), and dismissible at pleasure; while yet the Prodigal is reduced so low that even these the lowest, are objects now of his envy.

[3] 'To die by the shameful death of famine,' Thucydides, iii. 59.

which he has sunk. '*Hired servants*' of his Father, they yet '*have bread enough and to spare*,' while he, a son, and having once had a son's portion and place, must '*perish with hunger*.'[1]

We may picture the forlorn prodigal to ourselves as having sat long upon the ground, for the earth is the natural throne of the utterly desolate[2] (Job ii. 8, 13; Isai. iii. 26; xlvii. 1; Lam. ii. 10; Ezek. xxvi. 16), and revolving there into what a depth of wretchedness he has fallen. But now he gathers up anew his prostrate energies, as a better hope wakens in his bosom. Why should he tarry longer among the swine? '*I will arise*[3] *and go to my father*.' The words were urged by the Pelagians of old in proof that man could turn to God in his own strength,[4] and needed no drawing from above, no grace at once preventing and following; just as the (self-styled) Unitarians of modern times have found in the circumstances of the prodigal's return an argument that man's repentance is of itself sufficient to reconcile him with God, and this

[1] Thus Jerome (*Ad Dam. Ep.* xxi. 14); Ambrose (*Exp. in Luc.* vii. 220); and Bernard (*De Divers. Serm.* 8): 'For who that is bound with the habit of sin would not think himself happy were it given him to be as one of those whom he sees living lukewarmly in the world, without crime, yet very little concerned as to things above, but rather as to such as are upon the earth.' Cf. Schoettgen, *Hor. Heb.* vol. i. pp. 260, 532. Goebel in the *Theol. Stud. u. Krit.* 1874, p. 525, suggests that it is not exactly this tacit comparison and contrast between himself the son, and those other the hired servants, in his father's house, which he draws; but rather between himself the hired servant of an alien lord, and those other the hired servants in his father's house. Here the hired servant is perishing with hunger, there they have abundance of bread. The suggestion is an ingenious one, but I must be content to leave it as such.

[2] Thus Constance in *King John*, Act iii. Sc. 1:

> 'My grief's so great
> That no supporter but the huge firm earth
> Can hold it up: here I and sorrows sit;
> Here is my throne, bid kings come bow to it.'

[3] Augustine: 'He said "I will arise," for he had been seated.'

[4] But Augustine (*Ep.* 186): 'When would he have had this good thought had not the most compassionate Father secretly inspired him with it?' Cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* lxxvii. 39; and the quotation, p. 360.

without a Mediator or a sacrifice. Following in the same line a German Rationalist at the beginning of this century exclaimed: 'All the dogmatic dreams of the upholders of an atonement by blood vanish, like oppressive nightmares, before this single parable.' The assertions are utterly without warrant, such conclusions being sufficiently guarded against by innumerable clearest declarations; as by John vi. 44; Heb. x. 19–22, neither have we any ground for expecting that every passage in Scripture, least of all that parables, which exist under necessary limitations in their power of setting forth the truth,[1] shall contain the whole circle of Christian doctrine. He who will know the truth of God, must consider not what one Scripture says, but what all; and the silence of one passage must not be pleaded against the plain statements of innumerable other.[2]

'*And will say unto him, Father.*' That relation his obedience has not constituted, and so his disobedience could not disannul. This was the ground of his confidence, even that a son once is a son ever. The adoption of sonship in baptism, and the gifts and calling of God, are on his part without repentance or recall. They may and will perish, who choose to remain in guilty ignorance to the last that these things have been freely given them of God; but having been once given, they may claim and challenge them for their own whensoever they will; nothing which has passed can have extinguished their right to do this. '*I have sinned against heaven, and before thee;*' compare for this double confession Exod. x. 16—when we give these words their higher application, the two acknowledgments run into one, '*I have sinned against Thee, my Father in heaven:*'—'*and,*' as he goes on to say, '*am no more worthy to be called thy son.*' He shows

[1] Godet has brought this out well: 'The absence of any feature appropriate to represent the sacrifice of Christ is easily explained when we remember that we have here a parable, and that the atonement has no place in the relations of man with man.'

[2] 'The parable cannot contain the whole truth; but in the parable of the Prodigal Son we may say that the Saviour and Mediator is concealed in the kiss which the father gives the son' (Riggenbach).

his repentance to have been divinely wrought, a work of the Holy Spirit, in that he acknowledges his sin in its root, as a transgression of the divine law, as wrought against God. Thus did David: 'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned' (Ps. li. 4); while yet his offences had been against the second table. For we may *injure* ourselves by our evil, we may *wrong* our neighbour; but, strictly speaking, we can *sin* only against God; and the recognition of our evil at first and chiefly an offence against Him, is of the essence of all true repentance, and distinguishes it broadly from remorse and all other kinds of sorrow which may follow on evil deeds. This willingness to confess is ever noted in Scripture as the sign of a true repentance begun; even as the sinner's refusal to humble himself in confession before God is the sure note of a continued obduracy (2 Sam. xii. 13; Ezra ix. 6; Job ix. 20; xxxi. 33; xxxiii. 27; Ps. xxxii. 5; xxxviii. 18; Prov. xxviii. 13; Jer. ii. 35; iii. 13; xvi. 10; Hos. xiv. 2; 1 John i. 9, 10). In Augustine's words, 'He shows himself worthy, in that he confesses himself unworthy;'[1] while a scholar of St. Bernard's here exclaims: 'Keep, O happy sinner, keep watchfully and carefully this thy most just feeling of humility and devotion; by which thou mayest ever esteem the same of thyself in humility, of thy Lord in goodness. Than it there is nothing greater in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, nothing more precious in the treasures of God, nothing more holy among all graces, nothing more wholesome among all sacraments. Keep, I say, if thou wilt thyself be kept, the humility of that speech and feeling, with which thou confessest to thy Father, and sayest,

[1] And again: 'Be thy own accuser, and He will be thy indulger;' cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* xxxi. 5. Tertullian (*De Pœnit.* 9, 10) has much in connexion with this parable, on the benefit of unreserved confession: 'Confession of sins is as great a relief as dissimulation is an increase of their burden. For confession is the counsel of reparation, dissimulation of obstinacy. In proportion as thou sparest not thyself, so, believe me, does God spare thee.' The treatise breathes a far different spirit from that in which the other, *De Pudicitiâ*, is written; but does not the less show how serious a thing repentance was accounted in the early Church; how closely linked with outward self-denials and humiliations.

"*Father, I am no more worthy to be called thy son.*" For humility is of all graces the chiefest, even while it does not know itself to be a grace at all. From it they begin, by it they advance, in it they are consummated, through it they are preserved.'[1] Thus far all has been well; but the words that follow, '*Make me as one of thy hired servants*,'[2]—are these, it may be asked, the voice of returning spiritual health, so that we should desire to meet the temper which they imply in every *normal* repentance, or not? For the present we would only call attention to the fact that at a later period he lets them fall (ver. 21), and shall then have something more to say on this question.

There is no tarrying now; he makes haste and prolongs not the time; what he has determined to do, at once he does. '*He arose, and came to his father.*' He had believed in his father's love; he shall find that love far larger and freer than all which he had ventured to believe. '*But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him.*' It was not by an accident that his father was the first to see him. He doubtless for many a day, hoping all things, had watched and waited for his return; and now with the quick glance of love detected in the far distance him whom he had thus watched and waited for so long. '*And had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck* (Gen. xxxiii. 4; xlv. 14, 15; xlvi. 29; Acts xx. 37), *and kissed him.*'[3] The evidences of the father's love are described with a touching minuteness; he does not wait till the poor returning wanderer has come all the way, but himself hastens to meet him; neither does he wear at first an

[1] Guerricus (*Bernardi Opp.* vol. ii. p. 986): 'Since humility is the greatest of all virtues, but only so long as it is ignorant that it is a virtue: from this they begin, by this they advance, in this they are consummated, by this they are preserved.'

[2] Cajetan: 'I will not dare to seek restoration to the condition of a son, to the great gifts I once enjoyed: but I will seek the gifts of those who make their beginning, who are serving God in their desire for an eternal reward.'

[3] Κατεφίλησεν, kissed him, that is, not once only, but much and many times.

aspect of severity, only after a season to be relaxed or laid aside, but at once welcomes him with the kiss, which is more than a token of affection, being the significant, and in the East well understood, pledge of reconciliation and peace (Gen. xxxiii. 4; 2 Sam. xiv. 33; Ps. ii. 12); even as the *osculum pacis* of the Middle Ages. It is thus the Lord draws nigh unto them that draw nigh unto Him[1] (Jam. iv. 8); He listens to the first faint sighings of their hearts after Him, for it was He who awoke those sighings there (Ps. x. 17). And though they may be '*yet a great way off*,' with far too slight an insight into the evil of their sin, or into the holiness of God, He meets them, notwithstanding, with the evidences of his favour towards them. Neither does He compel them first to go through a dreary apprenticeship of servile fear at a distance from Him; but at once embraces them in the arms of his love, giving them at this first moment strong consolations—perhaps stronger and more abounding than afterwards, when more settled in their Christian course, they will always receive. And this, because they need such now, to assure them that they are accepted, despite of all the loathsomeness of their sin; to convince them of that which it is often so hard for penitents to believe, which tasks all their faith, that God has indeed put away their transgressions, and is pacified toward them.

But the prodigal, though thus graciously received, with his sin not once mentioned against him, does not the less make the confession which he had meditated when the purpose of returning was first conceived in his heart: '*Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.*' And this is well; for, though God may forgive, man is not therefore to forget. Let

[1] Thus there is an Eastern proverb, 'If man draws near to God an inch, God will draw near to him an ell;' or as Von Hammer (*Fundg. d. Orients*, vol. iv. p. 91) gives it:

Wer sich mir eine Spanne weit naht, dem eile ich eine Elle lang entgegen:
Und wer mir gehend entgegen kömmt, dem eile ich in Sprüngen zu.

us note too that it is *after*, and not *before*, the kiss of reconciliation, that this confession is made; for the more the sinner knows and tastes of the love of God, the more he grieves to have outraged that love. It is under the genial rays of this kindly love that the heart, before bound up as by a deadly frost, thaws and melts and loosens, and the waters of repentance flow freely forth. The knowledge of God's love in Christ is the cruse of salt, which alone can turn the bitter and barren-making streams of remorse into the healing waters of repentance (2 Kin. ii. 19–22). And thus the truest and best repentance follows, and does not precede, the sense of forgiveness; and thus too repentance will be a lifelong thing, for every new insight into that forgiving love will be as a new reason why the sinner should mourn to have sinned against it. It is a mistake to affirm that men, those, I mean, in whom a real spiritual work is going forward, will lay aside their repentance, so soon as they are convinced of the forgiveness of their sins; and that therefore,—since repentance, earnest, long-continued, self-mortifying repentance, is a good thing,—the longer men can be kept in suspense about their forgiveness the better, as thus a deeper foundation of repentance will be laid. This is a preposterous view of the relation in which repentance and forgiveness stand to each other; their true relation being opened to us in such passages as Ezek. xxxvi. 31, where the Lord says, '*Then*' (and for what that '*then*' means, see ver. 24–30; *after* I have cleansed you, given you a new heart, heaped my richest blessings upon you, *then*, under the sense of these) 'shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations.' See Ezek. xvi. 60–63, where the Lord avouches that He has established his covenant with Judah for this very end—'that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, *when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done.*' The younger son, albeit with the clearest evidence that his father is pacified toward him, does

not the less confess his shame.[1] He does not indeed utter all that he had once intended; he does not say, '*Make me as one of thy hired servants:*' though some authorities have brought these words from ver. 19, where they have right, to this verse, where they have none; for this purpose of shrinking back from his father's love, and from the free grace which would restore to him all, was the one troubled element of his repentance; and in his dropping of these words, in his willingness to be blessed by his father to the uttermost, there is evidence that the grace already received has not been received in vain. Bengel thinks it possible that his father cut him short, left him no opportunity to say what he intended, but suggestr also the truer explanation.[2] This being so, that scholar of St. Bernard's, whose excellent words on the precious grace of humility I quoted just now, is at fault here, exhorting as he does the returning penitent still to persist in taking the place of a servant, even after his father has bidden him to resume the position of a son. This is that false humility, of which we meet so much, and which often is so mightily extolled, in monkery, but of which we meet nothing in Scripture. It is the truest humility, when bidden to go up higher, to go. It was true humility in Peter to suffer the Lord to wash his feet; as it would have been false humility, as well as disobedience, to have resisted longer than he did (John xiii. 6–10). It is true humility in the prodigal, at his father's bidding, to accept at once the position of a son.

'*But the father said to his servants, Bring forth*'—or more correctly, '*Bring forth quickly*[3]*—the best robe, and put*

[1] Cajetan: 'Receiving such favour he does not put aside but carries out his holy purpose.'

[2] 'Either because his father's graciousness in coming to meet him kindled his filial confidence and absorbed all his feeling as a servant, or because the father's graciousness cut short the speech of his son.' So Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.* ii. qu. 33): 'For while he lacked bread he desired to be even a hired servant, but for this after his father's kiss he has now a noble scorn.'

[3] Ταχύ has a right to the place in the text, to which it is now admitted in the best critical editions.

it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.' He will restore to him a place and a name in his house, as in these words he plainly declares, all these being ornaments, not of the slave, but of the free;[1] all, therefore, speaking of restoration to his former dignity and honour. Or, if we cannot suppose the Roman customs which accompanied the lifting up of a slave to a freeman's rank, to have been familiarly known in Palestine, or alluded to here, yet since the giving of the robe and ring was ever accounted in the East among the highest tokens of favour and honour (Gen. xli. 42; 1 Macc. xi. 15; Esth. vi. 7–11), these commands would testify to the same.

Few even of those interpreters usually most averse to the tracing of a spiritual meaning in the minuter details of a parable, have been able to resist the temptation here. It has been debated whether '*the best robe*,' as in our Translation, or '*the former*[2] *robe*,' that which he wore of old when he walked a son in his father's house, the robe kept for him long, and now restored, will best express the intention of the original. The difference is not important (though our Translation is clearly right)—nor yet whether we say that by the giving of this robe is signified the imputation of the righteousness of Christ,[3] or the restoration of sanctity to the soul. If

[1] Thus Tertullian (*De Resur. Carn.* 57), of the manumitted slave: 'He is honoured with the splendour of a white robe, with the honour of a gold ring, with the name and tribe of his patron, and with a feast.' Grotius: 'The ring among the Romans is the mark of freedom, among Eastern peoples of exalted rank, as also of wealth' (Jam. ii. 2; Gen. xli. 42). Cf. Elsner, *Biblioth. Brem.* vol. iii. p. 906; and the *Dict. of Gr. and Roman Antt.* s. v. Rings, p. 824.

[2] Stolam primam (Vulg.); 'his original or former robe' (Tertullian); 'his ancient robe' (Theophylact); but rather, 'that most splendid robe 'most precious' (Euthymius): cf. Gen. xxvii. 15: 'goodly raiment.' Πρῶτος is often used in this sense of chiefest, best (Ezek. xxvii. 22; Passow, s. v.: der vornehmste, angesehenste). The στολή is the vestis talaris, the stately garment reaching to the feet (Mark xii. 38): see my *Synonyms of the N. T.* § 50.

[3] 'The garment of the Holy Spirit' (Tertullian); 'The robe which in another parable is called the wedding garment' (Jerome); 'The first robe

we see in it his rehabilitation in his baptismal privileges, then both will be included. They who shall '*bring forth the best robe*' have been generally interpreted as the ministers of reconciliation; and if we may imagine them as first removing from him the tattered garments, the poor swineherd's rags, which were hanging about him, then Zechariah iii. 4 will supply an interesting parallel. Those who stand before the Lord there, will correspond to the servants here; and what they do for the High Priest there, removing his filthy garments from him, and clothing him with a change of raiment, and setting a fair mitre on his head, the same will the servants do here for the son; with the difference only that instead of the mitre, the appropriate adornment there of the High Priest, the ring and the shoes are here mentioned; and the symbolic act has in each case the same signification; which there is plainly declared, 'Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee.' That passage brought to bear on this leaves it most probable that, by this clothing him with the best robe, is especially signified that act of God which, considered on its negative side, is a release from condemnation, a causing of the sinner's iniquity to pass from him,—on its positive side, is an imputation to him of the merits and righteousness of Christ (Isai. lxi. 10).

This explanation for other reasons is preferable, since we have the gift of restoration of the Spirit indicated in the ring with which the returning wanderer is also adorned.[1] In the East, as with us, the ring was often a seal (Esth. iii. 10, 12; Jer. xxii. 24). Here is a point of connexion between the

is the dignity lost by Adam' (Augustine); and elsewhere: 'The hope of immortality in baptism; the garment of incorruptibility' (Theophylact); 'The sanctification of the Spirit by which the baptized is clothed, and the penitent reclad' (Guerricus).

[1] Clement of Alexandria (Potter's ed. p. 1017): 'The royal seal and divine signet,' and presently after, 'The seal of glory.' The fragment whence these words are taken is interesting in many respects;—and among others in this, that the author, whether Clement or another, affirms of the Prodigal that he had not merely wasted the natural gifts of God, but especially abused 'the honoured blessings of baptism.'

giving of the ring and such Scriptures as Ephes. i. 13, 14; 2 Cor. i. 22, in which *a sealing* by God's Spirit is spoken of, whereby the faithful are assured, as by an earnest, of a larger inheritance reserved in heaven for them (Gal. iv. 6; Rom. viii. 23; 2 Cor. v. 5). Neither shall we plant ourselves altogether in another circle of images if we further regard the ring as the pledge of betrothal:[1] 'And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord' (Hos. ii. 19, 20).[2] Shoes are also put on his feet, to which corresponds the promise, 'I will strengthen them in the Lord; and they shall walk up and down in his name' (Zech. x. 12). The penitent shall be equipped for holy obedience,[3] having his 'feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace' (Ephes. vi. 15). No needful strength shall be wanting to him (Deut. xxxiii. 25). —'*And bring hither the fatted calf*' (a choice delicacy, Gen. xviii. 7; 1 Sam. xxviii. 24; Amos vi. 4; Mal. iv. 2),[4] '*and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry.*' It creates a confusion of images to go back[5] here to the sacrifice of Christ, which

[1] Ambrose (*De Pœnit.* ii. 3): 'Let him place on his hand a ring, which is the sign of faith and the seal of the Holy Spirit.'

[2] The whole chapter affords deeply interesting parallels: ver. 5 (the latter part) answering to ver. 11, 12 here; ver. 6–13 there to 13–19 here; and ver. 14–23 to 20–24.

[3] Guerricus: 'The shoes with which he is protected to enable him to tread under foot the poisons of serpents, or with which he is prepared for the work of the Gospel.' Grotius: 'To penitents received into grace God grants even this, that they are fitted for the teaching of others, if not by words certainly by example;' and he quotes well Ps. li. 13. Clement of Alexandria (Potter's ed. p. 1018) has much that is beautiful, and something fanciful, on these *ὑποδήματα*. They are sandals rather than shoes, which are of rare use in the East; the word is used interchangeably with *σανδάλια* by the LXX, though there is a distinction (see Tittmann, *Synonyms*, and the *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Antt.* s. v. Sandalium, p. 839).

[4] *Σιτευτός* here and Judg. vi. 25 = *σιτιστός*, Matt. xxii. 4.

[5] As Origen (*Hom.* 1 *in Lev.*) does.

was implicitly contained in the giving of the robe. That sacrifice, moreover, is not a *consequence* of the sinner's return, as the killing of the fatted calf is the consequence of the prodigal's, but the *ground* which renders such a return possible.[1] Nor should we, I am persuaded, see here any special allusion[2] to the Holy Eucharist, but more generally to the festal joy and rejoicing which is in the heavenly places at the sinner's repentance.[3]

As the shepherd summoned his friends (ver. 6), and the woman her neighbours (ver. 9), so here the householder his servants, to be sharers in his joy. For the very nature of true joy is, that it *runs over*, longs to impart itself: and if this be true of the joy on earth, how much more of the purer and unselfish joy in heaven.[4] And summoning his servants to rejoice, the father announces to them the grounds of the joy in which they are invited to share. Some might naturally be presumed to make part of the household now, who had not belonged to it at the time of the young man's departure. To them, therefore, it is needful to announce that this wanderer, whom they beheld just now in the swineherd's rags, is no other than a son of the house, and as such to be honoured. That there may be no doubt upon this matter, the father solemnly reinstates him in the rights and privileges of a son. '*This my son*'—so he names him in the presence of all—'*was dead*;'—for the state of sin is a state of death (1 John iii. 14; Matt. viii. 22; 1 Tim. v. 6; Ephes. ii. 1; Col. ii. 13), '*and is alive again*;' for the life in God is life indeed, is the only true life (John x. 28)—'*he was lost, and is found*' (1 Pet. ii. 25); and since thus the lost was found,

[1] Augustine endeavours to evade this difficulty: 'For unto each man Christ is then killed, when the man believes that He was so killed.'

[2] So Tertullian (*De Pudic.* 9) and Clement of Alexandria.

[3] Arndt (*De Vero Christ.* ii. 8): 'This feast betokens the joy of the angels, or that life-giving, joy-giving and crowning compassion which is depicted in Ps. lxiii. 5; Jes. lxvi. 13.'

[4] Origen (*Hom.* 23 *in Lev.*) on the words, '*My* feasts,' which there occur, asks: 'Has God then his feast days? He has. For the salvation of men is to him a great festival.'

and the dead was alive again, '*they began to be merry*' (Zeph. iii. 17; Cant. ii. 4).

At this point the parable, like the two preceding, might have ended. But the mention of '*two sons*' at ver. 11 has already indicated that this has a wider intention; and, complete as is this earlier part within itself, it shall also form part of another and more complex whole, and derive new beauty from the contrast now to be drawn between the large heart of God and the narrow grudging heart of man. For the bringing out of this contrast the elder son, who hitherto has been named and no more, now appears upon the scene. '*Now his elder son was in the field.*'[1] While the younger had been wasting his whole portion in excess abroad, he had been engaged at home, on his father's ground; and now, at the close of one among many toilsome days, is returning home, ignorant of all that had befallen; and only receiving the first hint, when, '*as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.*' It would be alien to the manners and feelings of the East, to suppose the guests themselves engaged in these diversions: they would be but listeners and spectators, the singers and dancers being hired for the occasion. Surprised at these unwonted sounds, '*he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.*' With what a fine touch the ungenial character of the man has been indicated already. He does not at once go in; he does not take for granted that when his father makes a feast, there is matter worthy of making merry about. But, as one already resolved to mislike what is proceeding, he prefers to remain without, and to learn from a servant the occasion of the joy; or, as he himself significantly puts it, '*what these things meant,*' demanding an explanation, as if they required it. '*And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed*

[1] Godet: 'While the house is rejoicing, the elder son is at work. We have here a type of the Pharisee busied with the observance of his rites, while the repentant sinners are rejoicing in the serene illumination of grace.'

the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.' How delicate again is here the observance of the smaller proprieties of the narrative. The father, in the midst of all his natural joy, is yet full of the moral significance of his son's return—that he has come back another person from what he was when he departed, or while he tarried in that far land. He sees into the deep of his joy, that he is receiving him now, a son indeed; once dead, but now alive; once lost to him and to God, now found alike by both. But the servant deals only with the external features of the case, with the fact that, after all he has gone through of excess and hardship, his father has received him '*safe and sound.*'[1] Even if he could enter more deeply into the matter, he confines himself with a suitable discretion to that which falls plainly under his own and every one's eye.[2]

The explanation is not satisfactory to the questioner. The contemplation of his father's joy, of his brother's safety, so far from stirring up any gladness in his heart, moves him rather to displeasure; instead of rushing into his brother's arms, '*he was angry, and would not go in.*' Nor even when his father '*came out and entreated him,*' would he lay aside his displeasure at the course which things were taking; but loudly complained of the unequal measure dealt out to him and to his brother, of the bounty bestowed upon his brother's misconduct: '*Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me*'—or, *to me thou never gavest*[3]—'*a kid* (Gen. xxvii. 9; xxxviii. 17; Judg. xv. 1), *that I might make merry*

[1] Ὑγιαίνοντα = 'safe and sound,' salvom et servatum, Plautus, *Aulul.* iv. 6. 11; salvom et sospitem, *Capt.* iv. 2. 93.

[2] Hofman takes a less favourable view of this servant's answer to the elder brother's question: 'With heartless scorn for the father whom the return of such a son can make so happy, he speaks in such a tone as will best please the evident ill-will of the brother, whom he thus incites on his own side.' But there is nothing to warrant this interpretation.

[3] Ἐμοὶ will so have the force which its position demands, but which now it has not.

with my friends.'[1] The word 'father,' it will be observed, does not escape his lips. And then he invidiously compares this treatment of him with the treatment of his brother; '*But as soon as this thy son*,' he says not '*my brother*'—'*was come*,' he says not '*was returned*,'[2] as of one who had come back to his own,—'*which hath devoured thy living*,' again invidiously, for in a sense it was his own—'*with harlots*,' most probably, but only a presumption on his part,[3] though he may have claimed to read backward the words of Solomon, 'he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance' (Prov. xxix. 3)—'*thou hast killed for him*' not a kid merely, but '*the fatted calf*,' the choicest calf in the stall. What would he have said, had he known all? could he have seen his brother arrayed in the best robe, and with all his other adornments, when this which alone he mentions, as it is all which he has learned from his informant, so fills him with indignation?

It is too joyful an occasion for the father to take that just exception which he might at the tone and temper of this remonstrance. There shall not, if he can help it, be a cloud upon any brow; and instead of answering with severity, he expostulates with the malcontent; shows him the unreasonableness of his complaint; warns him that he is now, in fact, falling into the very sin which his brother committed when he said, '*Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.*' He too is feeling that he does not truly possess what he possesses *with* his father, but that he must separate something off from the common stock, before he can count it properly his own. The same mischief lies at the root of his speech, as spoke out more plainly in his brother's; and this the father

[1] Jerome (*Ad Dam. Ep.* 21) on these words, '*with my friends*,' asks him: 'Canst thou have any mirth without thy father to keep the feast with thee?' Cf. Bernard, *In Cant. Serm.* xiv. 4.

[2] Bengel: 'As if speaking of a stranger, he uses the words "is *come*," not "is *returned*."'

[3] Massillon indeed is here upon his side, and takes this for granted too. He has a very impressive Lent Sermon on this sin of impurity, which he treats as the master sin of the Prodigal.

will make him see: '*Son*,' or with a still greater tenderness, '*Child, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine;*' and proceeds to show him the unloving spirit, out of which his discontent had grown, and the fitness of the present joy; '*It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad; for this thy brother*' (not merely '*my son*,' as he ungraciously had put it, but '*thy brother*,' *kinned* to him, and to whom therefore his *kindness* is due)—'*was dead, and is alive again*,[1] *was lost, and is found.*'

With this the parable concludes; nor are we told whether the discontent of the elder brother gave way before these expostulations or not. This for us will be mainly determined by the interpretation of the parable with which we have started. It must be freely owned that those who see in the younger brother the Gentile, and therefore in the elder the Jew,[2] find it encumbered here with fewer difficulties than such as deny that in its *primary* purpose it sets forth the relations of these to God and to one another. These last must look elsewhere for a solution of difficulties, which resemble closely those we have already met in the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard. They indeed resolve themselves into this single one,—Is *their* righteousness, whom the elder brother represents, true or false? An answer either way has its own perplexity. If true, how reconcile this with his contumacy towards his father, and his unloving spirit towards his brother?[3] What true believer charges God with injustice and partiality? grudges, and does not rather rejoice, when one who may have wandered more widely than himself, is brought home to the true fold? How, too, reconcile this assumption with the scope of this part of the parable, aimed as it is against the Pharisees, whose righteousness in the

[1] Schoettgen, *Hor. Heb.* vol. i. p. 877.

[2] As Augustine, *Quæst. Evang.* ii. qu. 33.

[3] Jerome's reply to Damasus (*Ep.* 21), more than once referred to already, shows these difficulties to have been felt quite as strongly in his time as now. It was just this question which Damasus had asked: 'Can such frightful jealousy be reconciled with his character as just?' 'A much discussed question' Theophylact calls it.

main was *not* real, but feigned and hypocritical? But if, on the other hand, pressed by these embarrassments, we refuse to see in him any true righteousness at all, in what sense shall we understand his having remained ever with his father, or how does an estimate of his character so entirely unfavourable fall in with his uncontradicted assertion of his own continued obedience, or with the need of approbation and assurances of favour, which he receives from his father's lips?

Either determination of the question has embarrassments of its own; theirs certainly has great, though perhaps not the greatest, who in the elder brother see the Pharisees,[1] with a righteousness altogether feigned and hypocritical. His assertions concerning his own continued obedience are suffered, they say, to pass unchallenged, because, even granting them true, the case would not be altered, the father arguing with him *e concesso*:[2] 'Be it so, that is not the question now in hand; allowing your obedience to have been unbroken, your works always well-pleasing in my sight, yet ought you in love to rejoice that your brother has returned, and to take your share in this festal gladness with which he is welcomed home.' But is it not possible, by a middle course, to escape the embarrassments which attend this no less than the opposite scheme of interpretation; namely, that we see in this elder brother a low, but not altogether false, form of legal righteousness? He is one whom the law has kept from gross offences; he has been occupied, though in a servile spirit, in the works of that law. So, no doubt, had it been with not a few of the Pharisees. Some were hypocrites; but some sincerely, though in much blindness of heart, followers after righteousness (Rom. x. 1, 2). The righteousness indeed was of a low sort,[3] in the strivings after which, being mostly external,

[1] Jerome, for instance, who says that Christ portrays the Pharisees, 'not as they were, but as they ought to have been.' Theophylact calls them 'hypothetically righteous.'

[2] Jerome: 'He did not allow the truth of what his son had said, but soothed his anger by another argument.'

[3] Salmeron: 'We must understand this as of persons of real but not conspicuous righteousness.'

they attained to no such acquaintance with the plague of their own hearts, as should render them mild and merciful to others, no such insight into the breadth of that law which they professed to keep, as should thoroughly abase them before God. Such may have been the murmurers here; not therefore utterly to be rejected, nor the good in them wholly denied; but needing to be shown what was deficient, narrow, and loveless in their service;—to be invited to renounce their servile for a filial spirit, and to enter into the nobler liberties of that Church and kingdom which Christ was establishing upon earth. Hitherto the elder son had been labouring '*in the field*,'[1] but now he is bidden to a festival. They whose work for God had hitherto been servile, the hard taskwork of the law, are invited now to '*come in*,' to enter into the joy of the Lord, the freedom of the Spirit.[2] This part of the parable will then be as much a preaching of the Gospel of the kingdom to the legalist, as its earlier part had been to the gross sinner;—as love to the one spoke there, so love to the other here.

But the elder son's reply (ver. 29, 30) to the father's first invitation shows only too plainly that he whom that son represents is ignorant of the nature of that kingdom to which he is invited. He is looking for certain definite rewards of his obedience, to the getting of something *from* God, in preference to possessing all *in* God.[3] Instead of regarding as his true reward, that he had been ever with his heavenly Father, he rather pleads this as establishing his claim to some further reward.[4] In the father's rejoinder (ver. 31),

[1] Ambrose: 'Busied with earthly toils and ignoring the things of the Spirit of God.' But Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* cxxxviii.) rather more favourably: 'This signifies those who were holy under the law, performing its works and precepts.'

[2] Augustine: 'He invites to the enjoyment of a more potent and more delightful exultation.'

[3] Augustine: 'The father saith not, Thou possessest all, but, All that I have is thine.'

[4] He should have felt, in Bernard's words: 'He is our recompenser, He is our recompense, nor do we now look for aught from him save himself.'

we must be careful to place the emphasis on the right word, for without this the meaning will entirely escape us. It is not, 'Son, *thou* art ever with me,' drawing thus a contrast between him and his brother, who for so long a time had *not* been with his father; but 'Son, thou art ever *with me*,' the emphasis resting on the concluding words. 'What need to talk of other friends? thou art ever with a better than them all, with myself. Why shouldest thou feel hurt that a kid was never given thee, when *all that I have is thine*?' To make the first clause of this rejoinder an honourable recognition of his past obedience, the second a promise that the whole inheritance will devolve on him, is a missing and marring of the whole. Rather in the first lies at once the keenest, and the most loving, rebuke: 'Am not I more to thee than all besides?' in the second the most earnest warning: 'What is mine is thine, if only thou wilt so regard it; what can I do for thee, if fellowship in my things fails to make thee rich?' How wonderfully does that '*All that I have is thine*,' when thus understood, declares to us the true nature of the rewards of the kingdom. In the elder son's esteem, whatever was bestowed on his brother was withdrawn from himself; but in the free kingdom of love one has not less, because another has more; all is possessed by each. The fountain of God's grace is no scanty desert spring, round which thirsty pilgrims need strive and struggle, muddying the waters with their feet, pushing one another away, lest those waters be drunk up by others before their turn shall arrive; but an inexhaustible river, on whose banks all may stand, and where none need grudge lest, if others drink freely, there will not enough remain for themselves. Not to one, but to each of his true servants and children the Lord can say, '*All that I have is thine*.'[1] If any then is straitened, and counts that he has not enough, he

[1] Augustine, on these words, says: 'For by the sons who are perfected, purified and already immortal all things are so held, that each thing belongs to all, and all things belong to each; for as cupidity possesses nothing without straitening, so charity possesses nothing which involves straitening.'

is straitened, as the elder son here, not in God, but in himself, and in his own narrow and grudging heart.

It is easy to perceive why nothing is told us concerning the success or failure of the father's attempt to remove the sullen dissatisfaction of his son; why, as we read the parable, there seems a certain abruptness in its close. This was inevitable, for it was still uncertain whether the Scribes and Pharisees might not be won to repentance; which repentance, though of another kind and for other sins, they needed quite as much as the publicans and harlots. The Lord, not distinctly declaring that the elder son obstinately refused *to the last* to enter in, or that he was finally excluded for his contumacy, intimated to these, that the kingdom of God was not yet closed against them; that they too, as well as the publicans and sinners, were invited and summoned to leave their low, poor, and formal service, 'the elements of the world' (Gal. iv. 3), and to enter into the glorious liberties of the kingdom of grace; they too guests, if they would esteem themselves such, at that marriage festival where He should manifest his glory, changing the weak and watery elements of the old dispensation into the generous and gladdening wine of the new (John ii. 1–11).[1]

For all this, none can read the parable without an ominous presentiment that the elder brother *does* refuse to the end to go in. And such refusal there was, and on the largest scale, when the Jews in the apostolic age would take no part in the great festival of reconciliation which celebrated the reception of the Gentile world into the Church of the redeemed; nay rather, with all their malice and their might set themselves against that reception (1 Thess. ii. 14). What a mournful

[1] Anselm's instructive *Dialogus Christiani et Judæi* concludes with these words from the former: 'Come now, as I bade thee, stay not outside, neither envy the robe, the shoes and the ring, the seal of faith, all which the Father has given to me, his penitent son; but come thou within, and share in the joy, and be a partaker of the feast. But if thou dost not so, then will I wait and endure thy indignation until the Father himself come forth and entreat thee; and meanwhile I will say unto the glory of the same Father, My ring is mine, My ring is mine.'

commentary is the whole book of Acts on these words, '*he would not go in*;' '*would not*,' because his brother was received so freely and with such tokens of joy (xiii. 45; xiv. 19; xvii. 5, 13; xviii. 12; xxii. 21–23). If that younger brother had been submitted first to a painful apprenticeship of the law, if he too had been sent to work '*in the field*,' it might have been another thing (Acts xv. 1); but that he should be thus made free of the kingdom, and brought into the festival at once,—this was more than the elder could endure. Numbers stayed openly and sullenly without. Others, as the Ebionites, only pretended to go in, or went in under a mistaken assumption that it should be as they in their narrow hearts desired (Gal. ii. 12–14), and discovering their mistake, presently withdrew themselves again.[1] Yet while all this was then the fact, it behoves us of the Gentile Church never to forget that all the conditions of the parable will be reversed at the end of the present dispensation, and the parts so shifted, that it is *we* who shall then be in danger of playing the elder brother's part, and of falling into his sin. And this we shall do, if we repine at the largeness of the grace bestowed upon the Jew, once the son ever with his Father, but now the Prodigal feeding upon husks, far away from his heavenly Father's house[2] (Hos. iii. 4, 5; Rom. xi.), to which however he shall one day return.

[1] Augustine: 'The elder brother is angered . . . Even so the Jews were incensed that the Gentiles by so short a method, without the imposition of any of the burdens of the law, and without the pain of the circumcision of the flesh, should receive in their sin the health-giving baptism.'

[2] Cajetan's view of the displeasure of the elder brother is interesting, and in its main features original. He speaks first of the sweetness which the penitent often finds at his first return unto God, '*the music and dancing*;'—for him all the glories of the Gospel have the freshness of novelty, an overpowering gladness, which they cannot possess for one to whom they have been familiar from the beginning. The joy of the latter has indeed been infinitely greater than this one burst of gladness, but spread over larger spaces of time:—so that, seeing the exultation of the newly converted, he may be tempted to ask, with a transient feeling of discontent, why to him also is not given this burst of exulting joy? why for him '*the fatted calf*' has been never slain?—The answer is, because he has been ever with his father, because his father's possessions are, and

have been always, his. His joy, therefore, is soberer and more solid,—not the suddenly swelling mountain torrent, but the deep, though smooth and silent, river: and what is given to the other, is given to him just because he is a beginner. Cajetan concludes thus: 'Here, careful reader, I would have you mark, that God sometimes sends to the newly-penitent great consolation of inward joy, until they be confirmed in the way of God; . . . but these are not the fruits of greater perfection, but are as it were the charms and caresses of the heavenly Father, which are denied to many who are more perfect.' In this spirit the Mystics observed how in the festivals, the first and eighth days, that is, their beginnings and their glorious consummations, were commonly the days of chiefest gladness; and they compare these joys to sugared dainties, with which those who are children in spiritual things are first allured into Christ's school. Volmar (*De Spirit. Perfect.*): 'This grace, therefore, of devotion is wont to be given to infants, that by it they may be incited to good works, just as at first whelps are allowed to taste the blood of the captured prey, that they may press more bravely upon the chase.'—In Kleine's *Gesch. des Dramas*, vol. ix. p. 178 sqq., there is an analysis of an early Spanish play, *Comedia Prodiga*, by Luis de Miranda, in seven acts, being the dramatized story of the Prodigal Son. This analysis is all that I know about it; but it is evidently not without considerable merits.

PARABLE XXV.

THE UNJUST STEWARD.

LUKE xvi. 1-9.

No one, who has seriously considered, will underrate the difficulties of this parable—difficulties which Cajetan found so insuperable that he gave up the matter in despair, affirming a solution of them impossible. It is nothing wonderful that it should have been the subject of manifold, and those the most singularly diverse, interpretations. The attempt to render a complete account of all of these would be an endless task, and I shall not attempt it;[1] but, as I go through the parable, I shall note what parts of it those interpreters, who have best right to be heard, have considered its key-words, and the meaning which they have made the whole to render up; I shall at the same time briefly note what seem the weak and unsatisfactory points in those explanations which I reject. For myself, I will say at the outset that very many of its interpreters have (to use a familiar expression), in my judgment, overrun their game. We have here, as I am persuaded, simply a parable of Christian prudence,—Christ exhorting us to use the world and the world's goods, so to speak, *against* the world, and *for* God.

Having brought the parable of the Prodigal Son to a close, He did not break off the conversation, but,—probably after a

[1] Schreiter, in a work entirely devoted to this parable (*Explic. Parab. de Improbo Œconomo Descriptio*; Lips. 1803), gives an appalling list of explanations offered, and a brief analysis and judgment of them all; but I have not been able to derive much assistance from the book; not to say that the number of explanations has since his time enormously increased.

short pause allowed, that his words might sink deeper into the hearts of his hearers,—resumed; not now, however, addressing the gainsayers any more, but those who heard Him gladly, '*his disciples*,' as we are (ver. 1) expressly told. We must not restrict this term to the Twelve (see Luke vi. 13); we should as little make it to embrace the whole multitude hanging loosely on the Lord, although up to a certain point well affected to Him. By '*his disciples*' we understand rather all whom his word had found in the deep of their spirit, and who, having left the world's service, had taken service with Him. To these the parable was addressed; for them too it was meant;[1] since it is little probable that, as some explain, it was spoken *to* them, but *at* the Pharisees. These last, it is true, were *also hearers* of the Lord's words (ver. 14), but the very mention of them as such forbids their being those to whom it was primarily addressed. Christ may have intended,—most probably did intend,—some of his shafts to glance off upon them, at whom yet they were not originally aimed. It will prove important, in relation to at least one explanation of the parable, that we keep in mind for whom first of all it was intended. Let us address ourselves without further preface to it.

'*There was a certain rich man, which had a steward*,'—not a land-bailiff[2] merely, but a ruler over all his goods, such as was Eliezer in the house of Abraham (Gen. xxiv. 2–12), and Joseph in the house of Potiphar (Gen. xxxix. 4). '*And the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods*;' or rather, '*that he was wasting his goods*;' for it is no past

[1] So with many others Bengel, who well remarks: 'These disciples are not the Twelve who left all things, and were rather to be treated as friends, but those who had been publicans.'

[2] Procurator therefore (see Becker, *Gallus*, vol. i. p. 109), and not villicus (Vulg.), as Jerome (*Ep.* 121, qu. 6) justly notes: 'The *Villicus* is properly the manager of a villa or farm, whence his name. But the Οἰκονόμος or steward has the charge not only of the produce but of the money and of all which his master possesses;' cf. *ad Eustoch. Ep.* xxii. 35: Greswell, *Exp. of the Par.* vol. iv. p. 3; Becker, *Charicles*, vol. ii. p. 37; and for higher uses of οἰκονόμος, Luke xii. 42; 1 Cor. iv. 1; Tit. i. 7; 1 Pet. iv. 10.

scattering, but a present, which is laid to his charge;[1] and this, as we may certainly conclude, not through mere negligence, but himself deriving an unrighteous gain from the loss and wrong which his master's property suffered under his hands. This of the lord needing that his steward's misconduct should reach his ears through a third party, belongs to the earthly setting forth of the truth; yet finds its parallel, Gen. xviii. 30, 31. There is no warrant whatever for assuming, as some have done, that the steward was calumniously accused; no hint of this conveyed in the word which the Lord employs. Satan is the *accuser* of the brethren (Rev. xii. 9), called therefore by this name; but the things of which he accuses them may be only too true. Certain Chaldeans *accused* the Three Children, malignantly indeed, but not falsely, of refusing to worship the golden image (Dan. iii. 8); Daniel himself is *accused* (still the same word in the Septuagint as here), and not calumniously, of having knelt and prayed to his God, in defiance of the edict of the king (Dan. vi. 24).[2] Those therefore who would clear altogether or in part the character of the steward can derive no assistance here.[3] Indeed his own words (ver. 3) contain an implicit

[1] Not quasi dissipasset, with the Vulgate; but, ut qui dissiparet, as Erasmus has it.

[2] Compare Josephus, *Antt.* vi. 10. 2.

[3] As Schleiermacher, who says: 'The right view of this parable is to be sure very much perverted, if the steward, who, after all, has not committed any breach of trust (?) on his own account, nor was charged with it, is notwithstanding to be termed οἰκον. τ. ἀδικίας, and we will not make up our minds to leave οἰκονόμος without an epithet, and to refer this ἀδικίας to ἐπήνεσεν' [against this construction see Winer, *Grammatik*, p. 185]: 'and if the master who treats his servant in so very arbitrary a way, and discharges him, without inquiry, upon a secret information, and who besides discovers no higher measure by which he judges of human actions than prudence, if this character is all along considered a blameless man.' But it is hard to see what would be gained by the altered construction. '*The Lord praised the steward for his injustice*,' comes nearly to the same thing as, '*The Lord praised the unjust steward*;' and with such analogous Hebrew phrases as μαμωνᾶ τῆς ἀδικίας, κριτὴς τῆς ἀδικίας (Luke xviii. 6), ἀκροατὴς ἐπιλησμονῆς (Jam. i. 25), he will scarcely persuade that the natural collocation of the words is to be abandoned,

acknowledgment of his guilt; he who is so dishonest now will scarcely have been honest before; and assuredly we shall do him no wrong in taking for granted that the accusation, brought against him very probably by some enemy and from malicious motives, was yet founded in truth.

Hereupon his lord '*called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee?*' or perhaps the question would be better, as in the Revised Version, '*What is this that I hear of thee?*' This is not examination, but rather the expostulation of indignant surprise,—'*of thee*,[1] whom I had trusted so far, to whom I had committed so much.' And then, the man not so much as attempting a defence, his dismissal follows: '*Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.*' Those who, like Anselm, see in the parable the history of the rise, progress, and fruits of repentance, lay much stress upon this remonstrance, '*How is it that I hear this of thee?*' It is for them the voice of God speaking to the sinner, bringing home to his conscience that he has had a stewardship, and has been abusing it; the threat, '*thou mayest be no longer steward*,' being in like manner a bringing home to him, by sickness or by some other means, that he will soon be removed from his earthly stewardship, and have to render an account. The man feels that he cannot answer God one thing in a thousand; that, once removed hence, there will be no help for him anywhere; he cannot dig, for the night will have come, in which no man can work; and he will be ashamed to beg for that mercy, which he knows will then be refused. Consistently with this view, they see in the

even to help out his marvellous interpretation, according to which the rich householder is the Romans, the steward the publicans, and the debtors the Jewish people; the lesson being, 'If the publicans show themselves mild and indulgent towards their nation, the Romans will in their hearts praise them, and they who have now lost all favour with their countrymen will by them be favourably received.' But how, it may be asked, could a coming into favour with the Jewish people, themselves out of all favour with God, be termed a reception into everlasting habitations?

[1] Wetstein: 'The words express surprise; of thee! whom I made my steward.'

lowering of the bills, not a further and crowning act of unrighteousness, but the first act of his righteousness, the dealing of one who will now, while he has time, lay out the things in his power with no merely selfish aims, but for the good of others, will scatter for God rather than for himself, seek to lay up in heaven and not on earth. The dishonesty they get over, either by giving this lowering of the bills altogether a mystical meaning, and so refusing to contemplate it in the letter at all, or in a way presently to be noticed. He is still called, they say, the '*unjust steward*' (ver. 8), not because he continues such; but because of his former unrighteousness; and for the encouragement of penitents, who are thus reminded that, unrighteous and ungodly man as he had been beforetime, he obtained now praise and approval from his lord. He retained the title, as Matthew the Apostle retained that of 'the publican' (Matt. x. 3), in perpetual remembrance of the grace of God which had found him in that ignoble employment, and raised him to so high a dignity; as Zenas is still '*the lawyer*' (Tit. iii. 13); Rahab '*the harlot*' (Heb. xi. 31); Simon '*the leper*' (Matt. xxvi. 6); not that such they were when receiving these designations, but that such they formerly had been.[1] To all this it may be replied that there is nothing in the man's counsels with himself that marks the smallest change of mind for the better, no acknowledgment of a trust abused, no desire expressed henceforward to be found faithful, but only an utterance of selfish anxiety concerning his future lot, of fear lest poverty and

[1] So the author of a sermon in the Bened. edit. of St. Bernard (vol. ii. p. 714), who gives this as the sum of the parable: 'He is worthy of much praise, who leaving the error of his former conversation, makes satisfaction to the rich God and returns to favour;' and Anselm (*Hom.* 12), who, however, sees in the steward only an unfaithful ruler in the Church, not every man to whom a dispensation has been committed, which he has been abusing;—he says: 'He deserved to be praised by his lord; and we therefore should praise him, nor should we dare to blame him in aught before he is therein corrected, as by thinking that in this behaviour towards the debtors he defrauded his lord; rather we should believe that therein by prudent counsel he was seeking his lord's profit, and fulfilled his will.'

distress may come upon him; and the explanation from analogous instances, however ingenious, of his being still characterized (ver. 8) as the '*unjust*' steward, is quite unsatisfactory; neither 'publican' nor 'lawyer' conveyed of necessity a sentence of moral reprobation.

But now follow his counsels with himself; and first his implicit acknowledgment that the investigation of his accounts can only have one issue, and that his definitive dismissal. Had he felt that he could clear himself, he might have hoped that a hasty word uttered by his master might be recalled; but he knows too well that any such clearing is impossible. There is nothing but hopeless destitution before him. '*What shall I do?*' he exclaims. For the same phrase compare Luke xii. 17; xx. 13; though in curiously different connexions. He had scattered his Lord's goods, squandered them on himself; but he had made no purse against that evil day which now all of a sudden had come upon him. His past softness of life has unfitted him for labour; '*I cannot dig;*'[1] his pride forbids him to sue for alms; 'better is it,' as the Son of Sirach had long ago exclaimed, 'to die than to beg' (Ecclus. xl. 28): '*to beg I am ashamed.*'[2] Yet this sense of utter helplessness and hopelessness endures not long. He knows what he will do; and has rapidly conceived a plan whereby to make provision against that time of need and destitution which is now so near at hand. If his determination is not honest, it is at any rate promptly taken; and this—that he was not brought to a nonplus, but at once devised a way of escape from his distresses—is a part of the skill for which he gets credit: '*I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship,*[3] *they may receive me into their houses,*' as one from whom they

[1] Compare Aristophanes, *Aves*, 1432: 'What has befallen me? To dig I know not how.'

[2] Quesnel: 'To the soul which has lost God and his grace what else remains besides sin and the consequences of sin, a proud poverty and slothful indigence, that is a general inability to labour, to prayer, and to every good work?'

[3] In the Vulgate: Amotus a villicatione; but Tertullian in happier Latin: ab actu summotus.

have received kindnesses, and who, therefore, may trust to find hospitable entertainment among them,—a miserable prospect (Ecclus. xxix. 22–28 ; xl. 20) ; yet better than utter destitution and want.

'*So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him.*' And now follows the collusive and fraudulent transaction between him and them. The two whose cases are instanced, and who must be regarded as representatives of many more,—of those '*all*' whom we just heard of, in the same way as elsewhere only *three* servants are named out of ten (Luke xix. 13),—owed to the householder, the one '*an hundred measures of oil*,' and the other '*an hundred measures of wheat*.' It is not likely that these were tenants who paid their rents in kind, which rents were now by the steward lowered, and the leases or agreements tampered with: the name '*debtor*' seems to point another way. Again, the enormous amount[1] of the oil and the wheat, both costly articles (Prov. xxi. 17), makes it not less unlikely that they were poorer neighbours or dependants, whom the rich householder had supplied with means of living in the shape of food,—not, however, as a gift, but as a loan, taking from them an acknowledgment, and looking to be repaid, when they had the ability. Rather we might assume the foregoing transactions by which these men came into the relation of his debtors, to have been these,—that he, having large possessions, and therefore large incomings from the fruits of the earth, had sold, through his steward, a portion of such upon credit to these debtors,—merchants, or other factors,—who had not as yet made their payments. They had given, however, each his '*bill*' or note of hand,—'*bond*' is the happy rendering of the Revised Version,

[1] '*Measures*' in our Translation, which may be small or large, fails to intimate this. Better Tyndale and Cranmer: '*tuns* of oil' (the Rhemish, '*pipes*'), and '*quarters* of wheat.' Exactly this quantity, one hundred *cors* of wheat, in an apocryphal gospel, where everything is on a gigantic scale, as with those whose only notion of greatness is size, the child Jesus received in return for a single grain of wheat cast by him into the ground (Thilo, *Cod. Apocryph.* p. 302). On these Hebrew measures see Ezek. xlv. 10, 11, 14; and Herzog, *Real-Encyclopädie*, vol. ix. p. 148.

—acknowledging the amount in which they were indebted to him. These, which had remained in the steward's keeping, he now returns to them,—'*Take thy bill*,'[1] bidding them to alter these, or to substitute others in their room, in which they confess themselves to have received much smaller amounts of oil and wheat than was actually the case, and consequently to be so much less in the rich man's debt than they truly were. To one debtor he remits half, to another the fifth, of his debt; by these different proportions teaching us, say those who justify his conduct, and even some who do not, that charity should be no blind profusion, exhibited without respect of the needs, greater or smaller, of those who are its objects, but exercised ever with consideration and discretion,[2] —a sowing of the seed by the hand, and not an emptying of it from the sack's mouth.

In this lowering of the bills, Vitringa[3] finds the key of the parable; his interpretation deserving to be recorded, if only for its rare ingenuity. The rich man is God, the steward the ecclesiastical leaders of the Jewish people, to whom was committed a dispensation of the mysteries of the kingdom. These were accused by the prophets, as by Ezekiel (xxxiv. 2), by Malachi (ii. 8), and lastly by Christ Himself (Matt. ii. 3), that they abused their stewardship, used the powers committed to them, not for the glory of God, but for purposes of self-exaltation and honour,—that they '*wasted his goods*.' They feel the justice of this accusation, that they are not in their Lord's grace, and only outwardly belong to his kingdom. Therefore they now seek to make themselves friends of others, of the debtors of their Lord, of sinful men; acting as though they still possessed authority in the things of his kingdom. And the device by which they seek to win these friends is by

[1] Γράμμα = χειρόγραφον (Col. ii. 14) = 'a writing acknowledging a debt,' by the Vulgate happily translated, cautio. See the *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Antt.* s. v. Interest of money, p. 524.

[2] Thus Gregory the Great, who quotes from Gen. iv.: 'If thou offerest rightly and dividest not rightly, thou hast sinned.'

[3] *Erklär. d. Parab.* p. 921, seq. It is the standing interpretation of the Cocceian school (Deyling, *Obss. Sac.* vol. v. p. 335).

lowering the standard of righteousness and obedience, inventing convenient glosses for the evading of the strictness of God's law, allowing men to say, 'It is a gift' (Matt. xv. 5), suffering them to put away their wives on any slight excuse (Luke xvi. 18), and by various devices, 'indulgences' in the strictest sense of the word, making slack the law of God (Matt. xxiii. 16); thus obtaining for themselves favour and an interest with men, and, however God's grace was withdrawn from them, still keeping their hold on the people, and retaining their advantages, their honours, and their peculiar privileges. In the casuistry of the Jesuits, as denounced by Pascal, we see a precisely similar attempt. This interpretation has one attraction, that it gives a distinct meaning to the lowering of the bills,—'*Write fifty, write fourscore;*'—which very few others do. The moral will then be no other than is commonly and rightly drawn from the parable: 'Be prudent as are these children of the present world, but provide for yourselves not temporary friends, but everlasting habitations. They use heavenly things for earthly objects and aims; do you reverse all this, and show how earthly things may be used for heavenly.'[1]

[1] With the interpretation of these words as a lowering of the standard of obedience very nearly agrees the use of the parable in the *Liber S. Joannis Apocryphus*, a religious book of the Albigenses (Thilo, *Codex Apocryphus*, p. 884). It is with this very question, '*How much owest thou unto my lord?*' and with the bidding, '*Write fifty*,' '*Write fourscore*,' that Satan is introduced tempting and seducing the inferior angels ('flattering the angels of the invisible Father'). An ingenious exposition by Gaudentius, bishop of Brescia, a contemporary of St. Ambrose, is in the same line: 'By the unjust steward we must understand the devil, who has been left in the world that fleeing from the cruelty of such a steward we may hasten as suppliants to the tenderness of God. This steward wastes his lord's substance, when he attacks us who are the Lord's portion. He meditates how he may best not only harass his lord's debtors, *i.e.* those who are entangled in sin, by open warfare, but how under a mask of deceitful kindness he may beguile them by fair pretence, so that, seduced by this fraudful benignity, they may the more readily receive him into their houses, and share his sentence to all eternity. . . . He guilefully engages to lighten the debts of his fellow servants, while he promises various kinds of indulgence to those

With this interpretation very nearly agrees that of the writer of an elaborate article in a modern German Review.[1] He too conceives the parable intended for the Scribes and Pharisees—but to contain *counsel* for them,—the unjust steward being set forth for them to copy; while Vitringa finds their *condemnation* in it. They were the ministers of a dispensation now drawing to a close; and when in its room the kingdom of Christ was set up, then their much-abused stewardship would be withdrawn from them. The parable exhorts them, in that brief period which should intervene between the announcement and actual execution of this purpose of God's, to cultivate such a spirit as would alone give them an entrance '*into everlasting habitations*,'—the spirit, that is, which they so much lacked, of mildness and love and meekness toward all men, their fellow-sinners. This spirit, and the works which it would prompt, he affirms, are fitly set forth under the image of a remission of debts [2]—and those debts due to another, since it is against God that primarily every sin is committed. Such a spirit as this flows out of the recognition of our own guilt, which recognition the writer

who are sinning either in faith or work. . . . The Saviour praises the craft of the steward both by way of threat and by way of foresight. By way of threat, since He condemns that most wicked prudence of the devil with the epithet "unjust": by way of foresight, since He strengthens the listening disciples against the counsels of the devil's arguments, in order that they may fight with all wariness and prudence against so cunning and prudent an enemy.'

[1] Zyro (*Theol. Stud. u. Krit.* 1831, p. 776). He is not aware that this had long ago been anticipated by Salmeron (*Serm. in Evang. Par.* p. 231): 'For because the scribes and Pharisees with the law and the priesthood were on the point of failing the Lord exhorts them to be careful not to deal sternly with sinners, that thus they may prepare for themselves friends who will receive them into the Gospel.'

[2] Weisse (*Evang. Gesch.* vol. ii. p. 162, seq.) produces as a great discovery, and as making everything plain, this view, that the lowering of the bills expressed, not acts of bounty and love with the temporal mammon, but the spiritual act of forgiveness of sins. Being unable to bring this into agreement with ver. 9, 'Make to yourselves friends *of the mammon of unrighteousness*,' he includes the words in italics in brackets, being 'convinced that Jesus never spoke them!'

finds in the absence on the steward's part of all attempts to justify or excuse himself. The same temper which would prompt them to these works of love and grace would fit them also for an entrance into the '*everlasting habitations*,' the coming kingdom, which, unlike that dispensation now ready to vanish away, should never be moved. But how, it may be asked, shall this interpretation be reconciled with the words, '*He said also unto his disciples*,' with which the Evangelist introduced the parable?[1] It will then plainly be addressed not to them, but to the Scribes and Pharisees.

With these new acts of unrighteousness this child of the present world filled up the short interval between his threatened and his actual dismissal from office. There is no hint that he attempted to conceal these fraudulent transactions, or that he called his lord's debtors together *secretly*,—whether it was that he trusted they would keep counsel, being held together by a common interest and by the bands of a common iniquity,—or that he thus falsified the accounts, careless whether the transaction were blown abroad or not; being now a desperate man, with no character to lose; at the same time confident that there would be no redress for his lord, when the written documents testified against him. More probably the thing was thus done openly and in the face of day,[2] the arrangement being one which, from some cause

[1] Similar to this is Tertullian's explanation (*De Fug. in Pers.* 13), only that for him the exhortation is addressed to the entire Jewish people, not to its spiritual chiefs only: 'Make to yourself, then, friends of mammon: how this is to be understood let the foregoing parable teach, which was addressed to the Jewish people, who, when they had badly applied the trust committed to them by the Lord, should have been zealous to make to themselves of the men of mammon, such as were we ourselves, friends rather than enemies, and to relieve us of the obligation of the sins by which we were holden unto God, by conferring upon us of that which was the Lord's, so that when they began to fall away from his favour they might betake themselves to our faith and be received into everlasting habitations.'

[2] His '*Sit down quickly and write*' has been urged by some as characteristic of a man wishing to huddle over the matter as fast as possible, for fear of discovery;—by Bengel: ταχέως 'hastily, stealthily': and

or other, when once completed, could not be disturbed. Were a secret transaction intended, the lord's discovery of the fraud would hardly be passed over; and the steward would scarcely obtain for a contrivance so clumsy that it was at once detected, even the limited praise which actually he does obtain. Least of all would he obtain such praise, if it depended merely on the forbearance of his master, in the case of discovery, which the event will have proved was probable from the beginning, whether the arrangement should stand good or not. Such forbearance could not have been counted on, even though the words [1] of the lord should lead us in the present instance to assume that he did allow the steward to reap the benefits of his dishonest scheming.

But whether the transaction was clandestine or not, that it was fraudulent seems beyond a doubt. Such, on the face of it, it is; and all attempts to mitigate or explain away its dishonesty are hopeless.[2] It may be, and by some has been

Maldonatus: 'This word *quickly* seems to betoken a fraudulent man engaged in an ill action, whose fear is that he may be caught in his crime, and that as the figures are being tampered with, some one may come upon him.' But they may also be explained as words of one who feels that he must act at once—that to-day he has an opportunity, which to-morrow will have passed from his hands. The transaction was evidently not with the debtors each apart from and unknown to the other, as is slightly yet sufficiently indicated by the σὺ δὲ addressed to the second.

[1] Jensen, however, who has an interesting essay on this parable (*Theol. Stud. u. Krit.* 1829, p. 699), sees a spiritual significance in the householder's forbearing to break the arrangement: 'That which is related of the master,—how he regards the dealing of the steward,—does not blame it, nor stand to his rights,—seems to me to be the setting forth of the grace of God, through which, instead of entering into judgment with sinful men, He rather rewards the good in them, which, according to strict right, could not even attain to secure them from punishment. For he leaves the steward to enjoy the fruit of his device; and since, after what has been said above, it cannot be conveniently supposed that he had no right to demand a strict reckoning in the matter, it only remains to consider this conduct as a voluntary forbearance on his part.' There are several other essays on the parable in the same Review, all of them more or less worthy of being consulted; thus 1842, p. 1012 sqq.; 1858, p. 527 sqq.; 1865, p. 725 sqq.

[2] One might say absurd, but that it has been done with so much

said, that this dishonesty is not of the essence of the parable, but an inconvenience arising from the inadequacy of earthly relationships to set forth heavenly. They must fail somewhere, and this is the weak side of the earthly relation between a steward and his lord, rendering it an imperfect type of the relation existing between men and God,—that in this latter relation, to use Hammond's words, 'the man hath liberty to use the wealth put into his hands so as may be most (not only for his master's, but also) for his own advantage, namely, to his endless reward in heaven, which, though it were an injustice and falseness in a servant here on earth, who is altogether to consider his master's profit, not his own, yet it is our duty and that which by the will and command of God we are obliged to do, in the execution of that steward's office which the rich man holds under God: and is the only thing commended to us in this parable; which is so far from denominating him that makes this advantage of the treasure committed to him an unjust or unrighteous steward in the application, that it denominates him *faithful* (πιστός) in the latter part of the parable, and him only *false* (ἄδικος) that doth it not.' In worldly things there is not, and there never can be, such absolute identity of interests between a master and a servant, that a servant, looking wholly to his own interests, would at the same time forward in the best manner his lord's. But our interests as servants of a heavenly Lord, that is, our true interests, absolutely coincide in all things with his; so

ability by Schulz, in an instructive little treatise (*üb. d. Parabel vom Verwalter*, Breslau, 1821), as to redeem it from such a charge. The ancient *οἰκονόμος*, he says, was one with far greater freedom in the administration of the things committed to him, than any to whom *we* should apply the title of *steward*; and the sum of his statement seems this (though the comparison is not his), that his conduct at this latest moment of his stewardship, however selfish it might be, yet was no more dishonest than it would be dishonest on the part of the minister of a kingdom, who had hitherto oppressed the people under him, and administered the affairs of the kingdom for his own interests and pleasures, yet now, when about to be removed, to seek to win the people's love and a place in their hearts, by remitting or lowering the heavy dues and taxes with which before he had burdened them.

that when we administer the things committed to us for Him, then we lay them out also for ourselves, and when for ourselves, for our lasting and eternal gain, then also for Him.

'*And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely.*' It need hardly be observed that it is the lord *of the steward*, twice before in the parable called by this name (ver. 3, 5), who is here intended, and not Christ *our* Lord, who does not speak directly in his own person till ver. 9, the intermediate verse being the point of transition from the parable to the direct exhortation.[1] The attempt to substitute '*cunningly*' for '*wisely*,' and so by limiting and lowering the commendation given, to evade the moral difficulty of the passage, cannot altogether be justified. '*Wisely*' I cannot regard as the happiest rendering, since wisdom is never in Scripture dissociated from moral goodness.[2] But if more commendation is implied in '*wisely*' than the original warrants, in '*cunningly*' there is less; '*prudently*' would best represent the original, and so in Wiclif's Version it stood, though the word disappeared from all our subsequent Versions; and, to my regret, has not been restored in the latest Revision.

But concerning the praise itself, which cannot be explained away as mere admiration of the man's cunning, it is true that none but a malignant, such as the apostate Julian, would make here a charge against the morality of the Scripture; or pretend, as he does, to believe that Jesus meant to com-

[1] So Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* liii. 2): '*His* lord commended his judgment, looking not to his own loss but to the man's wit.' Compare Luke xii. 42; xiv. 23, where in like manner ὁ κύριος, without further qualification, is used of an earthly lord.

[2] In Plato's words (*Menex.* 19): 'All knowledge that is separated from justice and the rest of virtue appears to be cunning rather than wisdom.' Rather φρονίμως is a middle term, not bringing out prominently the moral characteristics, either good or evil, of the action to which it is applied, but recognizing in it a skilful adaptation of the means to the end — leaving at the same time the worth both of the one and of the other to be determined by other considerations. The φρόνησις stands in the same relation to the σύνεσις (understanding) as σοφία to νοῦς (reason). See my *Synonyms of the New Testament*, § 75.

mend an unrighteous action, and to propose it, *in its unrighteousness*, as a model for imitation. With all this the praise has something perplexing in it; though more from the liability of the passage to abuse, unguarded as at first sight it appears, though it is not really so (for see ver. 11), than from its not being capable of a fair explanation. The explanation is this: the man's deed has two aspects; one, that of its dishonesty, upon which it is most blameworthy; the other, of its prudence, its foresight, upon which, if not particularly praiseworthy, it yet offers a sufficient *analogon* to a Christian virtue,—one which *should be* abundantly, but *is* only too weakly, found in most followers of Christ,—to draw from it an exhortation and rebuke to these; just as any other deeds of bold bad men have a side, that namely of their boldness and decision, on which they rebuke the doings of the weak and vacillating good. There are 'martyrs of the devil,' who put to shame the saints of God; and running, as they do, with more alacrity to death than these to life,[1] may be proposed to them for their emulation. We may disengage a bad man's energy from his ambition; and, contemplating them apart, may praise the one, and condemn the other. Exactly so our Lord disengages here the steward's dishonesty from his foresight: the one can have only his earnest rebuke; the other may be usefully extolled for the provoking of his people to a like prudence; which yet should be at once a holy prudence, and a

[1] Bernard: 'The martyrs of the devil hasten more eagerly to death than we to life.' A story of one of the Egyptian eremites illustrates the matter in hand. Chancing to see a dancing girl, he was moved to tears; being asked the reason, he replied, 'That she should be at such pains to please men in her sinful vocation; and we in our holy calling use so little diligence to please God.' Compare an incident in the life of Pelagia in Lipomannus, *Acta Sanctorum*, vol. v. p. 226. Thus too St. Louis, when in the East, was moved to jealousy by observing the zeal of the Mahomedans in transcribing and diffusing the books which they counted sacred; and quoting our Lord's words, '*The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light*,' was henceforward stirred up to a more active multiplication of those which would set forward the knowledge of the true God (Neander, *Kirch. Gesch.* vol. v. p. 583).

prudence employed about things of far higher and more lasting importance.[1]

The next verse fully bears out this view of the Lord's meaning: '*For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.*' We must find the same fault with '*wiser*' here as with '*wisely*' of the verse preceding; as '*prudently*' should replace it there, so '*more prudent*' here.[2] '*The children of this world*' are the Psalmist's 'men of the earth,' those whose portion is here, and who look not beyond; who, born of the world's spirit, order their lives by the world's rule. The phrase occurs only here and at Luke xx. 34; '*children of light*' he has in common with St. John (xii. 36) and St. Paul (1 Thess. v. 5; Ephes. v. 8). The faithful are called by this rather than any other of the many names of honour which are theirs; for thus their deeds, which are deeds of light, done in truth and sincerity, even as they are themselves children of the day and of the light, are contrasted with the 'works of darkness,' the 'hidden things of dishonesty,' wrought by the children of this present world, and of which he who plays the foremost part here has just given so notable a specimen.

The declaration itself has been differently understood, according as the sentence has been differently completed. Some complete it thus: '*The children of this world are wiser in their generation,*' namely in worldly things, '*than the children of light*' are in those same worldly things; that is, Earthly men are more prudent than spiritual men in earthly matters; these earthly are their element, their world; they are more at home in them; they give them more thought, bestow more labour upon them, and therefore succeed in them

[1] Clarius: 'He praises the wit, he condemns the deed.' Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.* ii. 34) is less satisfactory: 'These similitudes are spoken by way of contrast, for us to understand that if he who was defrauding could be praised by his lord, how much more do those please the Lord God who work according to his commandments.' Cf. Jerome, *Ad Algas. Ep.* 121, qu. 6.

[2] It would seem that exactly thus an elder Latin Version had astutiores (Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps.* liii. 2).

better: though it be true that this is only as owls see better than eagles—in the dark.[1] But it is hard to perceive how a general statement of this kind bears on the parable, which most are agreed urges upon the Christian, not prudence in things earthly by the example of the worldling's prudence in the same, but rather, by the example of the worldling's prudence in these things, urges upon him prudence in heavenly.

Others, then, are nearer the truth, who complete the sentence thus: '*The children of this world are wiser in their generation*'—or '*for their own generation*,' as the R. V. has it—'*than the children of light*' for theirs, that is, for heavenly matters; '*the children of light*' being thus rebuked that they bestow less pains to win heaven than '*the children of this world*' bestow to win earth,—that they are less provident in heavenly things than those are in earthly,—that the world is better served by its servants than God is by his. If however we would perfectly seize the meaning, we must see in the words, '*in their generation*,'—or rather, '*toward*,' or '*for their own generation*,'[2]—an allusion, often missed, to the debtors in the parable. They, the ready accomplices in the

[1] So Cajetan: 'The children of this world are more prudent than the children of light, not absolutely, but in a nation that walketh in darkness, just as owls see better in the dark than do the creatures of the day.'

[2] Εἰς τὴν γενεὰν τὴν ἑαυτῶν, which Theophylact explains, ἐν τῷ βίῳ τούτῳ: and the Vulgate renders, in generatione suâ. Greswell has well shown (*Exp. of the Par.* vol. iv. p. 52) how untenable such translation is; which, indeed, could never have been entertained, except on the notion so often adopted,—that prepositions in the New Testament have no meaning in particular, that, for instance, εἰς and ἐν are promiscuously used; on which matter see Winer, *Gramm.* § 54. 4. Storr (*Opusc. Acad.* vol. iii. p. 117) gives rightly the sense: 'They who solely regard earthly things ("the children of this world") influenced like the steward (ver. 1, 3, 4) by prudence towards their own family or "generation," that is, towards those of the same way of thinking, who equally with themselves are "children of this world," towards their brothers, whose regard is as earthly as their own (cf. ver. 5–7), are wont to excel those who long for the light and for everlasting happiness, who often have no such zeal (cf. ver. 4) to bind to themselves by benefits either their own family, that is those who also are longing for the light, who equally with themselves are "children of light" and destined to attain to the "everlasting habitations" (ver. 9), or

steward's fraud, showed themselves children of the same generation as he was; they were all of one race, children of the ungodly world; and the Lord's declaration is, that the men of this world make their intercourse with one another more profitable,—obtain more from it,—manage it better for their interests, such as those are, than do the children of light *their* intercourse with each other.[1] For what opportunities, He would imply, are missed by these last, by those among them to whom a share of the earthly mammon is entrusted, —what opportunities of laying up treasure in heaven, of making to themselves friends for the time to come by showing love to the poor saints, or generally of doing offices of kindness to the household of faith, to those of the same generation as themselves,—whom, notwithstanding this affinity, they yet make not, to the extent they might, receivers of benefits, to be returned hereafter a hundredfold into their own bosoms.

His disciples shall not so miss their opportunities; but, after the example of him who bound to himself by benefits the men of his own generation, bind those to themselves who, like themselves, were '*children of light*:'[2] '*And I say unto*

again the common Lord of the family (Matt. xxv. 40); so that there was all the greater need to press the warning which follows, Luke xvi. 9.' Weisse (*Evang. Gesch.* vol. ii. p. 161) translates εἰς τ. γεν. τ. ἑαυτ. correctly, Im Verkehr mit ihres Gleichen; Neander too vaguely, Von ihrem Standpunkte.

[1] Teelman (p. 133): 'The children of this world are said to be wiser than the children of light, but wiser according to their generations. The truth of this parable is sufficiently proved by comparing it with the desires and actions of the faithful, who in working out their salvation with fear and trembling are often seized with sloth and with languidness in the pursuit of virtue and of good works and generally in the adapting of earthly goods to uses pleasing to God.'

[2] Yet for all this, who could be entirely satisfied with such a summing up of the parable as Calvin's? 'The sum of this parable is that we should deal humanely and kindly with our neighbours, so that when we are come to the tribunal of God we may reap the reward of our liberality.' But if this is all, why an *unjust* steward? So too for the early Church writers the parable is often no more than an exhortation to liberal almsgiving. So Irenæus (*Con. Hær.* iv. 30), Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 27), Athanasius, Theophylact: so also Erasmus, Luther,—who says:

you, Make to yourselves friends of'—or '*out of*,' or '*by means of*'—'*the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.*' This '*mammon of unrighteousness*' has been sometimes explained as wealth unjustly gotten,[1] by fraud or by violence, 'treasures of wickedness' (Prov. x. 2).[2] The phrase so interpreted would be easily open to abuse, as though a man might compound with his conscience and with God, and by giving some small portion of alms out of unjustly acquired wealth make the rest clean unto him. But plainly the first command to one who finds himself in possession of this would be to restore it to its rightful owners, as Zacchæus, on his conversion, was resolved to do (Luke xix. 8); for 'he that sacrificeth of a thing wrongfully gotten, his offering is ridiculous' (Ecclus. xxxiv. 18; xxxv. 12); and out of such there could never be offered acceptable alms to Him who has said, 'I hate robbery for burnt-offering.' Only when this restoration is impossible, as must often happen, could it be lawfully bestowed upon the poor. Others understand by '*mammon of unrighteousness*' not so much wealth by the present possessor unjustly acquired, as wealth which in a world like this can hardly have been gotten together without sin somewhere—without something of the defilement of that world from which it was gathered clinging to it;[3]—if not sin in the present possessor,

'It is a sermon on good works, and especially against avarice, that men abuse not wealth, but therewith help poor and needy people,'—and many more.

[1] Augustine affirms (*Serm.* cxiii. 2) that such abuse of the words was actually made: 'Some by understanding this amiss plunder the goods of others, and distribute a portion of them to the poor, thinking that thus they are doing that which is commanded. For, say they, to plunder the goods of others is the mammon of unrighteousness, and to distribute some portion of them, especially to the needy saints, is to make to oneself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. Such an interpretation is to be amended, or rather is altogether to be blotted from your hearts.'

[2] Θησαυροὶ ἀσεβείας (Theodotion).

[3] Thus Jerome quotes the proverb, Dives aut iniquus aut iniqui hæres ('A rich man is either a scoundrel or a scoundrel's heir'), as illustrating these words. It is 'mammon *of unrighteousness*,' Cajetan says, 'because

yet in some of those, nearer or more remote, from or through whom he received it: which being so, he that inherits the wealth inherits also the obligation to make good the wrongs committed in the getting of it together. But the comparison with ver. 12, where '*unrighteous mammon*,' a phrase equivalent to '*mammon of unrighteousness*,' is set against '*true riches*'—these '*true*' being evidently heavenly enduring goods, such as neither fade nor fail,—makes far more like that '*mammon of unrighteousness*' is uncertain, unstable mammon, one man's to-day, and another's to-morrow; which if a man trust in, he is trusting in a lie, in that which sooner or later will betray his confidence[1] (1 Tim. vi. 17),

there are few or no fortunes into the amassing or preservation of which sin has not entered, either on the part of the possessors or of their instruments, or of their fathers or ancestors;' with which compare Ecclus. xxvi. 29; xxvii. 2: 'As a nail sticketh fast between the joinings of the stones, so doth sin stick close between buying and selling;' and the Italian proverb, Mai diventò fiume grande, che non v' entrasse acqua torbida. Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.* ii. qu. 34): 'Because such wealth only belongs to the wicked, who place in it their hope and the abundance of their bliss;' cf. *Serm.* L. 4. Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* iv. 33): 'For we all know that money is the author of injustice, and the lord of all the world;' Melanchthon: 'He calls mammon unrighteous, not as wealth unjustly won, nor as held against the owner's conscience, but because of the manifold abuses which in this weakness of mankind are wont to follow its possession' (Eccles. v. 13).—Could it be proved that 'mammon' (more correctly spelt with a single *m*) was the Plutus of the Syrian mythology, worshipped as presiding over wealth, the antithesis in the words, '*Ye cannot serve God and mammon*,' would be more pointed yet; but the assertion is quite without proof. Neither Augustine (*De Serm. Dom. in Mon.* 2; *Serm.* cxiii. 2) nor Jerome (*Ad Algas.* qu. 6) gives a hint of the kind. All that Augustine says is this: 'What the Phœnicians call mammon in Latin is called lucrum; what the Hebrews call mammona, in Latin is called divitiæ or wealth.' The regarding of mammon as a false god, a most pardonable error, seeing that both Spenser and Milton have turned it to so grand a use, belongs to the Middle Ages. Thus Peter Lombard (ii. dist. 6): 'Riches are called by the name of a devil, namely Mammon. For Mammon is the name of a devil, by which name riches are called according to the Syriac tongue.' Lachmann, strangely enough, on the three occasions upon which it occurs in the N. T., prints it with an initial capital letter.—See a good note by Drusius (*Crit. Sac.* in loc.).

[1] The use of ἄδικος for 'false' runs through the whole Septuagint.

which he must leave (Eccles. ii. 18, 19; v. 15), or which must leave him (Prov. xxiii. 5). And '*mammon of unrighteousness*' it may in a deeper sense be justly called, seeing that in all property a principle of evil is implied; for in a perfect state of society, in a realized kingdom of God upon earth, there would be no such thing as property belonging to one man more than another. In the moment of the Church's first love, when that kingdom was for an instant realized, 'all that believed were together, and had all things common' (Acts iv. 32–35);[1] and this existence of property has ever been so strongly felt as a witness for the selfishness of man, that in all schemes of a perfect commonwealth,—which, if perfect, must of course be a Church and a State in one,—from Plato's down to the Socialists', this community of goods has entered as a necessary condition. And thus, however the present owner of the wealth, or those who transmitted it to him, may have fairly acquired it, yet it is not less this '*unrighteous* mammon,' witnessing in its very existence as one man's, and not every man's, for the selfishness of man,—for the absence of that highest love, which would make each man feel that whatever was his was every one's, and would leave no room for a *mine* and *thine* in the world. With all this, we must not forget that the attempt prematurely to realize this or any other little fragment of the kingdom of God, apart from the rest,—the corruption and evil of man's heart remaining unremoved, and being either overlooked or denied,—has ever proved a fruitful source of some of the worst mischiefs in the world.

Thus *μάρτυς ἄδικος*, a false witness (Deut. xix. 16; cf. ver. 18): *ἰατροὶ ἄδικοι*, 'physicians of no value' (Job xiii. 4; cf. Prov. vi. 19; xii. 17; Jer. v. 31).

[1] Augustine: 'Men fused by the fire of charity into one soul and one heart, of whom none would call anything his own;' and *Enarr. in Ps.* lxviii. he explains '*mammon of unrighteousness*': 'Perhaps the unrighteousness consists even in this, that thou hast and another hath not, that thou aboundest and another lacks;' as elsewhere in the same spirit: 'We possess that which is another's, when we possess aught that is superfluous.' Thus Aquinas: 'The riches of unrighteousness, *i.e.* of inequality;' of which one has so much and another so little.

The words, '*that when ye fail*,' are an euphemistic way of saying, 'that when ye die.' But indeed there is another reading, '*that when it fails*,' that is, the mammon (cf. Luke xii. 33); which is to be preferred.[1] Many have shrunk from referring what follows, '*they may receive you*,' to the friends who shall have been secured by the aid of the unrighteous mammon; such reference seeming to them to ascribe too much to men and to their intercession, to imply a right on their parts who have received the benefits, to introduce their benefactors '*into everlasting habitations*,' and so to be trenching on the prerogative which is God's alone. For some who have entertained these misgivings '*they*' are the angels, as we find angels (ver. 22) carrying Lazarus into Abraham's bosom; others understand that it is God and Christ who will '*receive*;' while for others the phrase is impersonal (cf. xii. 11, 20; xxiii. 31); '*they may receive you*' being equivalent to '*you may be received*.' But if we regard this verse, not as containing an isolated doctrine, but in vital connexion with the parable of which it gives the moral, we shall at once perceive why this language is used, and the justification of its use. The reference to the debtors is plain; they, being made

[1] Ἵνα ὅταν ἐκλίπῃ. Many older Versions attest that reading; which Lachmann has allowed; and Tischendorf (ἐκλείπῃ); and now the Codex Sinaiticus; yet not the Vulgate (cum defeceritis), nor yet the earlier Latin (Irenæus, *Con. Hær.* iv. 49, quando fugati fueritis). Compare θησαυρὸς ἀνέκλειπτος (Luke xii. 33), ἀνεκλιπὴς θησαυρός (Wisd. vii. 14), πλοῦτος ἀνεκλιπής (viii. 16). Some words of Seneca (*De Benef.* vi. 3) afford a striking parallel: 'M. Antonius seems to me to have behaved nobly when, according to the poet Rabirius, on seeing his fortune passing to another and nothing left for himself . . . he exclaimed: "At least I have all that I have given away." Oh how much he might have had, had he chosen! These are the assured riches, destined to abide steadfast amid all the fickleness of human fortune, and the greater they grow the less envy will they excite. Why sparest thou thy wealth as though it were thine own? Thou art a steward . . . Dost thou ask how thou mayst make these things thine own? By giving them away. Take counsel then for thy estate, and prepare for thyself its assured and indisputable possession: thou wilt make it not only more honourable, but more secure.' Augustine quotes here the Virgilian line (*Æn.* vi. 664): Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo.

friends, were to receive the deposed steward into temporary habitations; and the phrase before us is an echo from the parable, the employment of which throws back light upon it, and at once fixes attention on, and explains its most important part. It is idle to press the words further, and against all analogy of faith to assert, on the strength of this single phrase, that even with God's glorified saints, with any except Himself, will reside power of their own to admit into the kingdom of heaven; but idle also to affirm that '*they may receive you*,' in the second clause of the sentence, can refer to any other but the friends mentioned in the first—which no one, unless alarmed by the consequences which others might draw from the words, could for an instant call in question.[1] The true parallel to this statement, at once explaining and guarding it, is evidently Matt. xxv. 34–40. The heavenly habitations, being '*everlasting*,'[2] are tacitly contrasted with

[1] Cocceius: 'Δέξωνται might be understood impersonally, but the thread of the parable demands its reference to the friends. Not because by their own merits men may receive others into everlasting habitations, but because amid the joy of the sons of God and their applause and goodwill in God and his Spirit, such are received by God as have wished to be their friends. The will of the just and blessed ones is efficacious, because it is the "mind of the Spirit," Rom. viii. 27.' Cf. Augustine, *Quæst. Evang.* ii. qu. 38; and Gerhard (*Loc. Theoll.* loc. xxvii. 8. 3): 'They receive us not so much by their prayers in this life, as by their witness and suffrage in the day of judgment.'

[2] These αἰώνιοι, those πρόσκαιροι. Σκηνή, the tent pitched at evening and struck in the morning, or the temporary booth (Lev. xxiii. 40–43) formed of planks and branches, itself implies anything but a lasting habitation; is directly contrasted with such at Heb. xi. 9, 10, where of Abraham we are told that he dwelt in tabernacles (σκηναῖς), because he looked for a city with foundations. Compare Isai. xxxviii. 12: 'Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent;' Job xxvii. 18; 2 Cor. v. 1. But *these* σκηναί are αἰώνιοι, they are μοναί (John xiv. 2), or *mansions*, being pitched by God, 'a tabernacle that shall not be taken down' (σκηναὶ αἱ οὐ μὴ σεισθῶσιν, Isai. xxxiii. 20). Godet: 'The poetical expression "the everlasting tents," or "habitations," is borrowed from the history of the patriarchs. The tents of Abraham and of Isaac under the oaks of Mamre are transported by thought into this life to come, which is represented under the image of a glorified Canaan.'

the temporary shelter which was all that the steward, the child of the present world, procured for himself with all his plotting and planning, his cunning and dishonesty,—also, it may be, with the temporary stewardship which every man exercises on earth, from which it is not long before he fails and is removed:—how important therefore, the word will imply, that he should make sure his entrance into a kingdom that shall not be moved (cf. Eccles. xi. 2).[1]

In the verses which follow (10–13), and which stand in vital coherence with the parable, it is very noteworthy that not prudence, but fidelity, in the dispensation of things earthly is urged; putting far away any such perversion of the parable, as that the unfaithfulness of the steward could have found a shadow of favour with the Lord. The things earthly in which men may show their faithfulness and their fitness to be entrusted with a higher stewardship, are slightingly called '*that which is least*,' as compared with those spiritual gifts and talents which are '*much*;' they are termed '*unrighteous*,' or deceitful '*mammon*,' as set over against the heavenly riches of faith and love, which are '*true*' and durable '*riches*;' they are '*that which is another man's*,'[2] by comparison with the heavenly goods, which when possessed are our own, a part of our very selves, being akin to our truest life. Thus the Lord at once casts a slight on the things worldly and temporal, and at the same time magnifies the importance of a right administration of them; since in the dispensing of these,—which He declares to be the least,—to be false and with no intrinsic worth,—to be alien from man's essential being, He at the same time announces that a man may prove his fidelity, show what is in him, and whether he can fitly be entrusted with a steward-

[1] Profane literature does not often offer so happy a parallel to the words of Scripture as is furnished here in a beautiful passage from the *Dyscolus* of Menander. This also dwells on the fleeting character of wealth, which only becomes immortal when it is turned to the nobler uses of beneficence; and may be found in Meineke, *Fragm. Comic. Græc.* p. 892.

[2] 'Neither true riches, nor your riches,' as Augustine terms them.

ship of durable riches in the kingdom of God.[1] And in ver. 13 He further states what the fidelity is, which in this stewardship is required: it is a choosing of God instead of mammon for our Lord. For in this world we are as servants from whom two masters are claiming allegiance: one is God, man's rightful lord; the other is this unrighteous mammon, given to be our servant, to be wielded by us in God's interests, and in itself to be considered as slight, transient, and another's; but which, in a sinful world, has erected itself into a lord, and now challenges obedience from us. Thus if we yield, we shall not any longer lay out according to God's will that which He lent us to be merely a thing beneath us, but which we shall then have allowed a will and a voice of its own, and to speak to us in accents of command. We shall not any longer be stewards and servants of God; for that usurping lord has a will so different from his will, gives commands so opposite to his commands, that occasions must speedily arise when one will have to be despised and disobeyed, if the other be honoured and served;[2] God, for instance, will command a scattering, when mammon will urge to a further heaping and gathering; God will require a laying out upon others, when mammon, or the world, a laying out upon ourselves. Therefore, these two lords having characters so different, and giving commands so contrary, it will be impossible to reconcile their services (Jam. iv. 4); one must be despised, if the other is held to; the only faithfulness to the one is to break

[1] The Jews have various sayings and parables on the ways in which God proves men in little, to try whether they are worthy to be entrusted with much. Thus David He tried first with 'those few sheep in the wilderness,' which because he faithfully and boldly kept (1 Sam. xvii. 34–36), therefore God 'took him from the sheepfolds to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance' (Ps. lxxviii. 70, 71). See Schoettgen, *Hor. Heb.* vol. i. p. 300.

[2] Stella has here a lively comparison: 'If a dog is following two men who are walking along a road, it is not easy to decide which of them is its master. But if one of the men parts from the other, it is immediately shown clearly enough which is the master. For the dog leaves the stranger and follows the one he knows, thereby clearly showing that this is its master.'

with the other: '*Ye cannot serve*[1] *God and mammon.*' Such appears to me the connexion between ver. 13 and the two which go before, and between all these and the parable of which they are intended to supply the moral.[2]

[1] Δουλεύειν, to which word its full force is to be given. Abraham and Job and other of God's saints have been rich; but of each of these, in Chrysostom's excellent words here, it could be said, 'He did not serve Mammon, but possessed it and ruled it, he was its master, not its slave.' See Suicer, *Thes.* s. v. δουλεύω.

[2] Of strange explanations of this parable one of the strangest is quoted by Jerome (*Ad Algas. Ep.* 121, qu. 6), from the *Commentaries* of Theophilus, bishop of Antioch; if indeed these *Commentaries* are genuine, which Jerome himself elsewhere (*De Script. Eccles.*) calls in doubt. The unjust steward is the Apostle Paul, who being forcibly thrust out by God from his Judaism, afterwards made himself a place in many hearts, through declaring the remission of sins and the Gospel of the grace of God, and for this was praised, being 'changed from the austerity of the Law to the clemency of the Gospel.' See for the same Abelard's noble hymn, *De S. Paulo Apostolo*; it is quoted in my *Sacred Latin Poetry*, 3rd edit. p. 209. This is only outdone by a modern writer (see Unger, *De Par. Jes. Nat.* p. 85), who will have it that the Lord meant himself by the unjust steward! After this we need not marvel that Pontius Pilate, Judas Iscariot, and the Devil (see Gieseler, *Kirch. Gesch.* vol. ii. pt. 2, p. 606) have all been suggested. But the meanest of all expositions is Hartmann's (*Comm. de Œcon. Improbo*, Lips. 1830), of which it will suffice to say that he explains ver. 16 thus: 'Make to yourselves friends *of those that are rich in this world* (this is his interpretation of ἐκ τ. μαμ. τ. ἀδικ.), that, should you wax low in the world, you may be sure of a retreat for the remainder of your days.' In Wolf's *Curæ* and Köcher's *Analecta* other foolish and futile interpretations may be found.

PARABLE XXVI.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

LUKE xvi. 19–31.

THE first question in the treating of the Scripture now before us is this, namely, Have we here a parable at all? Is it not of the essence of such that in it things heavenly should be set forth by aid of things earthly, that there should be, so to speak, an earthly rind and a heavenly fruit, and that we should pierce through the one to arrive to the other? But in this pregnant little history, as commonly, and I believe rightly, understood, there is nothing of the kind; and assuredly in strictness it does not fulfil the conditions of a parable. As much has been acknowledged by many in old times as in new.[1] There is indeed an interpretation of this passage, which has found a certain amount of favour, and which, if accepted, would restore it to its rights as a parable; but one which even for this gain I am not disposed to adopt. To this I shall again recur before leaving the Scripture which we have here in hand altogether. Setting for the present the question of parable or no-parable aside, and not further calling in question this title which is commonly given to it, I proceed to its nearer consideration. It is addressed to the Pharisees (see ver. 14, 15), and thus a difficulty presents itself at once. '*Covetous*' no doubt these were; the Evangelist expressly

[1] Thus the anonymous author of *Quæstiones et Responsa*, which are found in many editions of Justin Martyr, distinctly disclaims for it the right to be called a parable (*resp.* 60); Ambrosius in like manner ('it seems a narrative rather than a parable'); and so too Irenæus and Tertullian.

declares as much (ver. 14; cf. Matt. xxiii. 14), but prodigal excess in living, like that of the rich man in the parable, is nowhere, in sacred history or profane, imputed to them.[1] So far from this, their manner of life was sparing and austere; many among them were rigid ascetics. Our Lord Himself allowed all this; his model Pharisee fasts twice in the week (Luke xviii. 12). Their sins were in the main spiritual; and what other sins they had were compatible with a high reputation for spirituality, which covetousness is, but not a profuse self-indulgence and an eminently luxurious living. Mosheim feels the difficulty so strongly, that he supposes the parable directed against the Sadducees,[2] of whose selfish indulgence of themselves, and hard-hearted contempt for the needs of others (for they had wrought into their very religious scheme that poverty was a crime, or at all events an evidence of the displeasure of God), we shall then, he says, have an exact description. But the parable cannot be for them; there is no mention of Sadducees present, neither can there be any change between ver. 18 and 19 in the persons addressed; as is still more evident in the original than in our Version.

We may, perhaps, explain the matter thus. While it is quite true that covetousness was the sin of the Pharisees, and not prodigal excess, an undue gathering rather than an undue scattering, yet hoarding and squandering so entirely grow out of the same evil root, being alike the fruits of unbelief in God and in God's word, of trust in the creature more than in the Creator, are so equally a serving of mammon (though the form of the service may be different), that when the Lord would rebuke their sin, which was the trust in the world rather than in the living God, there was nothing to hinder his taking an example from a sin opposite in appearance to theirs,—but springing out of exactly the same evil condition

[1] Josephus (*Antt.* xviii. 1. 3) says of them, 'they think lightly of how they live, and in no wise give way to luxury,' and that the Sadducees mocked them for their fasts and austerities.

[2] *De Reb. Christ. ante Const.* p. 42. Wetstein, who says of the Pharisees, 'they fasted often, and were quiet in their attire.

of heart,—by which to condemn them. For we must never forget that the primary intention of the parable is not to teach the dreadful consequences which will follow on the abuse of wealth and on the hard-hearted contempt of the poor, —this only subordinately,—but the fearful consequences of unbelief, of a heart set on this world, and refusing to give credence to that invisible world here known only to faith, until by a miserable and too late experience the existence of such has been discovered. The sin of Dives in its root is unbelief: hard-hearted contempt of the poor, luxurious squandering on self, are only the forms which his sin assumes. The seat of the disease is within; these are but the running sores which witness for the inward plague. He who believes not in an invisible world of righteousness and truth and spiritual joy, must place his hope in things which he sees, which he can handle, and taste, and smell. It is not of the essence of the matter, whether he hoards or squanders: in either case he puts his trust in the world. He who believes not in a God delighting in mercy and loving-kindness, rewarding the merciful, punishing the unmerciful, will soon come to shut up his bowels of compassion from his brethren, whether that so he may put more money in his chest, or have more to spend upon his lusts. This was the sin of Dives, and source of all his other sins, that he believed not in this higher world which is apprehended by faith,—a world not merely beyond the grave,—but a kingdom of truth and love existing even in the midst of the cruel and selfish world; and this too was the sin of a worldly-minded Pharisee; and his punishment was, that he made discovery of that truer state of things only when the share in it, once within his reach, was irrecoverably gone. That his sin at the root is unbelief shows itself again in his supposing that his brethren would give heed to a ghost, while they refused to give heed to the sure word of God, to '*Moses and the prophets.*' For it is of the very character of unbelief, to yield to portents and prodigies that credence which it refuses to God and his truth. Caligula, who mocked at the existence of the gods, would hide himself under a bed

when it thundered;[1] superstition and unbelief being as twin births of the corrupt heart of man, and of the number of those extremes, whose nature it is to meet. We must ever keep in mind that this, the rebuke of unbelief, is the main intention of the parable; for if we conceive its primary purpose to warn against the abuse of riches, it will neither satisfactorily cohere with the discourse in which it is found, nor will it possess that unity of purpose, which so remarkably distinguishes the parables of our Lord: it will divide itself into two parts, only slightly linked together,—having not a single but a double point. But when we contemplate unbelief as the essence of the rich man's sin, his hard-heartedness towards others, with his prodigality towards himself, being only forms of its manifestation, we shall then at once admire the perfect unity of all parts of the parable, the intimate connexion of the conversation with Abraham in the later part, with the luxurious living of the earlier.

'*There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously*[2] *every day.*' The '*purple and fine linen*' are named often together (Esth. i. 6; Rev. xviii. 12; Prov. xxxi. 22, where 'fine linen' would be better than 'silk,' as in the Authorized);[3] both being in highest esteem, and the combination of colours which they offered, blue and white, greatly prized. The extreme costliness of the true sea-purple of antiquity is well known. It was the royal hue; and the purple garment then, as now, a royal gift (Esth. viii. 15; Dan. v. 7; 1 Macc. x. 20; xi. 58;

[1] Suetonius, *Caligula*, 51.

[2] Parkhurst is dissatisfied with this '*fared sumptuously*' (εὐφραινόμενος λαμπρῶς), as failing to express the exultation and merriment of heart in which the rich man lived. He proposes '*who lived in jovial splendour*;' Greswell, '*enjoying himself sumptuously*;' and others, '*making merry sumptuously*;' the Revised suggests this alternative: '*living in mirth and splendour.*' Teelman (*Comm. in Luc.* xvi. p. 320, seq.) urges the same objection to the Vulgate, epulabatur laute. The old Italic, jucundabatur nitide (Irenæus, iii. 41), would have pleased the objectors better; or Luther's, lebte herrlich und in Freuden.

[3] See Delitzsch, in loco.

xiv. 43); with it too the heathen idols were clothed (Jer. x. 9); there was as much, therefore, of pride as of luxury in its use. The byssus, or '*fine linen*,' was hardly in less price or esteem.[1] It is with a vesture of this that Pharaoh arrays Joseph (Gen. xli. 42); the coat and the mitre of the High Priest are of the same (Ex. xxviii. 39); even as the wife of the Lamb and the armies of heaven are said to be clothed in white linen (Rev. xix. 8, 14). All then of rarest and costliest he freely bestowed upon himself. Nor was it on some high days only that he so arrayed himself and feasted. The '*purple and fine linen*' were his ordinary apparel, the sumptuous fare his every day's entertainment. Yet with all this, as we cannot be too often reminded, he is not accused of any breach of the law,—not, like those rich men by St. James (ver. 1–6), of any flagrant crimes. 'Jesus said not, a calumniator; He said not, an oppressor of the poor; He said not, a robber of other men's goods, nor a receiver of such, nor a false accuser; He said not, a spoiler of orphans, a persecutor of widows: nothing of these. But what did He say?—'*There was a certain rich man.*' And what was his crime?—a lazar lying at his gate, and lying unrelieved.'[2] Nor is he,—though sometimes so called, as in the heading of the chapter in our Bibles,—'a glutton.' To regard him as this, as a 'Sir Epicure Mammon,' serves only to turn the edge of the parable. He was one of whom all may have spoken well; of whom none could say worse than that he was content to dwell at ease,

[1] Pliny (*H. N.* xix. 4) tells of byssus exchanged for its weight in gold; it served, he says, 'especially for the delight of women.' We have no hendiadys here; not 'fine linen dyed of a purple hue.' The byssus did sometimes receive this colour, yet its glory was rather in its dazzling whiteness (Rev. xix. 8, 14); so Pliny (*H. N.* xix. 2), speaking of the fine linen of Upper Egypt, 'No others are to be preferred to these either for whiteness or softness: they make most charming robes.' The byssus here is the inner vest, the purple the outer robe (see the *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Antt.* s. v. Byssus, p. 169; Winer, *Realwörterbuch*, s. v. Baumwolle; Bähr, *Symbolik d. Mos. Cult.* vol. i. pp. 310, 338, vol. ii. 72).

[2] Augustine, *Serm.* clxxviii. 3. Massillon has from this point of view a deeply impressive Lent sermon upon this parable.

would fain put far from himself all things painful to the flesh, and surround himself with all things pleasant.—His name Christ has not told us, but the poor man's only: 'Seems He not to you,' asks Augustine,[1] 'to have been reading from that book where He found the name of the poor man written, but found not the name of the rich; for that book is the book of life?' 'Jesus,' says Cajetan, 'of a purpose named the beggar, but the rich man He designated merely as "*a certain man*," so to testify that the spiritual order of things is contrary to the worldly. In the world, the names of the rich are known, and when they are talked of, they are designated by their names; but the names of the poor are either not known, or, if known, are counted unworthy to be particularly noted.'[2]

'*And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus*,[3] *which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.*' In the porch or vestibule of the rich man's palace, whose name, though well known on earth, was unrecognized in heaven, the beggar Lazarus was flung.[4] Such friends and familiars as he

[1] *Serm.* xli.

[2] So Bengel: 'Lazarus is known in heaven by his name, the rich man is not reckoned by any name.' Euthymius mentions that some called the rich man Nimeusis; and they used to show, perhaps still profess to show, the ruins of his house at Jerusalem. Thus an old traveller: 'Fifteen paces further on is the house (as they make out) of the rich feaster, built of stones squared and hewn, of magnificent and elegant construction, and conspicuous for its high, though ruined, walls.'

[3] Λάζαρος = Deus auxilium, God is my help, a name exactly corresponding to the German Gotthelf. The name was a very common one. In the Index to Dindorf's *Josephus* no less than twenty-three Eleazars are enumerated. The profound impression which this parable has made on the mind of Christendom is attested by the passing of the word *lazar* into so many languages.

[4] It is a pity that the Authorized Version has not given to ἐβέβλητο here its full force, and the Revised as little. Godet gives it well: 'The word ἐβέβλητο, *was laid* or *cast*, expresses the carelessness with which those who placed him there abandoned him to the care of the people who in this great mansion were continually going and coming.'

once had may have grown weary of him, and at length have cast him there, and with this released themselves of their charge, counting they had done enough, when they cast him under the eye, and thus upon the pity, of one so abundantly able to relieve him. How long he had lain there is not recorded; but long enough for the rich man, as he passed in and out, to have grown so familiar with him, that in Abraham's bosom he recognizes him at once. Ignorance, therefore, of the beggar's needs he could not plead. This excuse it was left for another to plead for him;[1] who, in his eagerness to fasten charges of unreason or injustice on Scripture, affirms that he is punished without cause, 'his only crime having been his wealth.' But he could not help knowing, and, if he had not known, that ignorance itself would have been his crime; for, with the leisure of wealth, he should not have remained unacquainted with the want and woe at his doors.

As the rich man's splendid manner of living was painted in a few strokes, in a few as expressive is set forth the destitution of Lazarus. Like Job (Job ii. 7), he was '*full of sores*;' hungry, and no man gave to him,—for, though these last words have properly no place in the text, doubtless we should understand that he desired, *but in vain*, '*to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table*' (Judg. i. 7); even these were not thrown to him, or not in measure to *satisfy* his hunger. Nor was this all. '*The dogs*'—such as wander without a master through the streets of an Eastern city) Ps. lix. 14, 15; 2 Kin. ix. 35, 36)—'*came and licked his sores.*' Chrysostom, and others after him, see here an evidence of the extremity of weakness to which disease and hunger had reduced him; there was not in him strength

[1] Strauss (*Leben Jesu*, vol. i. p. 671); yet not he the first; for there is an essay (reprinted in Hase, *Thes. Theol.*) by A. L. Königsmann, *De Divite Epulone a Christo immisericordiæ non accusato*, 1708. But Grotius rightly remarks, that Lazarus was cast, 'in the very sight of the rich man, that the latter might in no wise be able to allege ignorance;' and see Neander, *Leben Jesu*, p. 205, note.

enough even to fray away the dogs, which, licking his sores, aggravated their pain. I believe they are right. It is true that medicinal virtue has been popularly ascribed to the tongue of the dog; [1] which, moist and smooth, would, as it is urged, rather assuage than exasperate the smart of a wound. But most unwelcome, as we cannot doubt, would the service of this unclean animal have been to the Jew; an aggravation, not an alleviation, of his miserable estate. We have then stroke for stroke. Dives is clothed with purple and fine linen, Lazarus covered only with sores. One fares sumptuously, the other hungers for crumbs. One has hosts of attendants to wait on his every caprice; though this circumstance is left to our imagination to supply; the tender mercies of the dogs are all which the other knows.[2]

It has been often said that nothing is expressly told us of the moral condition of Lazarus, of his faith, his patience, his hope. Such is not exactly the case; for as names are realities in Christ's kingdom of truth, he who received the name Lazarus, or 'God is my help,' from his lips, must have had faith in God; and it was this his faith, and not his poverty, which brought him into Abraham's bosom. In all homiletic use of the parable this should never be forgotten. How often Augustine, having brought home to the prosperous children of the world the tremendous lessons which are here for them, turns round to the poor, warning them that something more is wanting than sores and rags and hunger to bring them into a conformity with Lazarus, and into the place of his rest. With this outward poverty another poverty, even

[1] H. de Sto. Victore: 'The tongue of a dog when it licks has healing power' (cf. Winer, *Realwörterbuch*, s. v. Speichel). When Hilary (*Tract. in Ps.* cxxii.) sets him on a dunghill (in aggestu fimi), this is an exaggeration of his own, a trait in fact borrowed from Job ii. 8.

[2] Godet, as I am now satisfied, is right when he comments thus on these words: 'The words ἀλλὰ καί, *yea even*, which betoken a gradation of suffering, forbid us to see in this fact of the dogs licking the sores of Lazarus any alleviation of his woes. The lick of the tongue which these unclean animals gave, as they passed, to the unbandaged wounds of the poor man is the last touch in the picture of his nakedness and desolation.

poverty of spirit, must go hand in hand; for that other does not in itself constitute humility, though an excellent help to it; even as the riches of this world do not of necessity exclude humility, but only constitute an enormous temptation, lest they that have them be high-minded, and trust in those uncertain riches rather than in the living God: and he often reminds his hearers how that very Abraham into whose bosom Lazarus was carried, had on earth been rich in flocks and herds and in all possessions (Gen. xiii. 2).[1]

But this worldly glory and this worldly misery are alike to have an end: they are the fleeting shows of things, not the abiding realities. '*And it came to pass, that the beggar died;*' and then how marvellous the change! he whom but a moment before no man served, whom only the dogs tended, '*was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.*'[2] Some

[1] Thus *Serm.* xiv. 2: 'Worn with weakness, covered with rags, faint with hunger, a beggar tells me: "The kingdom of heaven is my due, for I am like unto that Lazarus: it is to such as us that the kingdom of heaven is due, not to those who are clad in purple and fine linen, and who feast daily in splendour."' Augustine replies: 'Whereas thou sayest that thou art even as that saint who was full of sores, I fear that in thy pride thou art not what thou sayst; thou must be truly poor, thou must be devout, thou must be humble. For if of this thy ragged and ulcerous poverty thou makest a boast, because thou art even as he who lay destitute at the door of the rich, thou lookest indeed to thy poverty, but lookest at nought else.' *Enarr. in Ps.* lxxxv. 1: 'Are we to say that the poor man by virtue of his poverty was carried by the angels, and the rich by the fault of his riches sent into torment? Rather we must understand that in the poor man it was humility which was honoured, and in the rich man it was pride which was condemned. That it was not riches but pride that was punished in the rich man is briefly proved. Of a surety the poor man was carried into Abraham's bosom. Now of Abraham himself the Scripture says that he had here wealth of gold and silver, and was rich upon the earth. If whoever is rich is hurried to torments, how is it that Abraham had gone before the poor man, so as to receive him when he was carried unto his bosom? But Abraham amid his riches was poor and humble, fearing and obeying every commandment.' Cf. *Ep.* clvii. 4; *Enarr. in. Ps.* cxxxi. 15, and *in Ps.* li. 9: 'What does it profit thee, if thou lackest the means, and burnest with desire?' This last passage is a profound commentary on Matt. xix. 23–26.

[2] Luther: 'So he who while he lived had not even one man as his

have by this understood 'an eminence and privilege of joy which Lazarus had' (Jeremy Taylor); that he was brought into the *chiefest* place of honour and felicity, such as the sons of Zebedee asked for themselves (Matt. xx. 23); not admitted merely to sit down among the rest of the faithful with Abraham at the heavenly festival, but to lean on his bosom, an honour of which only one could partake, as the beloved disciple leaned upon Jesus' bosom at the paschal supper (John xiii. 23). Not so, however; the image underlying these words is not that of a festival at all; in Hades there is no place for such, nor till the actual coming of the kingdom. '*Abraham's bosom*' must find its explanation not from Matt. viii. 11; Luke xiii. 29, 30; but rather from John i. 18. It is a figurative phrase to express the deep quietness of an innermost communion.[1] Besides, the Jews, to whose theology the phrase belongs, spoke of *all* true believers as going to Abraham, as being received into his bosom.[2] The phrase was equivalent for them to the being 'in the garden of Eden,' or 'under the throne of glory,' gathered, that is,

friend, of a sudden is honoured by the ministry not of one angel, but of many.' The belief was current among the Jews that the souls of the righteous were carried by angels into paradise (see Thilo, *Cod. Apocryphus*, vol. i. pp. 25, 45, 777).

[1] Lud. Capellus (*Spicilegium*, p. 56): 'The expression Abraham's bosom seems here to be taken not so much from the custom of reclining at table (as the phrase is commonly understood) but rather from the instance of children dearly beloved by their parents, and fondled by them in their bosom or lap, where also at times they sweetly rest.' And Gerhard (*Loc. Theoll.* loc. xxvii. 8, 3): 'It is called a bosom by a metaphor taken from parents, who, when their children are wearied with much running about, or are returned home from a journey, or by some mischance have been made to weep, in order to soothe them take them into their lap that there they may take sweet rest.' Jeremy Taylor has a curious suggestion: 'Or else κόλπος Ἀβραάμ, *sinus Abrahæ*, may be rendered "the *bay* of Abraham," alluding to the place of rest where ships put in after a tempestuous and dangerous navigation. The angel of the Lord brought the good man's soul to a safe place where he should be disturbed no more.'

[2] Josephus (*de Macc.* 13) puts this exhortation into the mouth of one of the Maccabæan martyrs: 'For if we die thus Abraham and Isaac and Jacob will receive us into their bosoms.'

into the general receptacle of happy, but waiting souls [1] (see Wisd. iii. 1–3). Christ by using has been rightly considered as sanctioning and adopting the phrase; it has thus passed into the language of the Church; [2] which has understood by it the state of painless expectation, of blissful repose, to intervene between the death of the faithful in Christ Jesus, and their perfect consummation and bliss at his coming in his kingdom. It is 'paradise' (Luke xxiii. 43); the place of the souls under the altar (Rev. vi. 9); it is, as some distinguish it, blessedness, but not glory.[3] Thither, to that haven of rest and consolation, Lazarus, after all his troubles, was safely borne.[4]

'*The rich man also died, and was buried;*' we naturally conclude, from the course of the narrative, *after* Lazarus, the mercy of God being manifested in the order of their deaths: Lazarus more early delivered from the miseries of his earthly lot; Dives allowed a longer space for repentance.[5] But his

[1] See Lightfoot, *Hor. Heb.* in loc.

[2] For ample quotations from the Greek Fathers, see Suicer, *Thes.* s. v. κόλπος: compare Augustine (*Ep.* 187) and Tertullian (*De Animâ*, 58). Aquinas (*Sum. Theol.* pars 3ª, qu. 52, art 2) gives the view of the Middle Ages; Cajetan, of the modern Romish Church: 'In the limbo of the fathers there was the consolation alike of the certainty of eternal bliss, of holy fellowship, and of freedom from all punishment of the sense.' Limborch (*Theol. Christ.* vi. 10, 8) in a striking passage compares the immediate state of the good to a sweet and joyful dream, while the wicked are as those afflicted with horrible and frightful dreams, each being to waken on the reality of the things of which they have been dreaming: exactly as Tertullian calls the state a 'foretaste of judgment.'

[3] Beatitudo, but not gloria.

[4] Augustine (*Serm.* xli.): 'The burden of Christ is as wings. By these wings this beggar flew into Abraham's bosom.'

[5] Thus Jeremy Taylor (*Sermon preached at the Funeral of the Lord Primate*): 'According to the proverb of the Jews, "Michael flies but with one wing, and Gabriel with two;" God is quick in sending angels of peace, and they fly apace; but the messengers of wrath come slowly; God is more hasty to glorify his servants than to condemn the wicked. And therefore in the story of Dives and Lazarus we find that the beggar died first; the good man Lazarus was first taken away from his misery to his comfort, and afterwards the rich man died.'

day of probation comes also to an end. Possibly the setting of Lazarus under his eye had been his final trial; his neglect of him the last drop that had made the cup of God's long-suffering to run over. Entertaining him, he might have unawares entertained angels; but having let slip this latest opportunity, on the death of Lazarus follows hard, as would seem, his own. There is a sublime irony, a stain upon all earthly glory, in this mention of his burial, connected as it is with what is immediately to follow. The world, loving its own, followed him no doubt with its pomp and pride, till it could not follow any further. There was not wanting the long procession of the funeral solemnities through the streets of Jerusalem, the crowd of hired mourners, the spices and ointment very precious, wrapping the body; nor yet the costly sepulchre, on which the genial virtues of the departed were recorded. This splendid carrying of the forsaken tenement of clay to the grave is for him what the carrying into Abraham's bosom was for Lazarus; it is his equivalent; which, however, profits him little where now he is[1] (Eccles. viii. 10). For death has been for him an awakening from his flattering dream of ease and self-enjoyment upon the stern and terrible realities of eternity. He has sought to save his life, and has lost it. The play in which he acted the rich man is ended, and as he went off the stage, he was stripped of all the trappings with which he had been furnished that he might sustain his part: there remains only the fact that he has played it badly, and will therefore have no praise, but

[1] Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* xlviii. 18): 'A spirit is being tormented among the souls below, what does it profit it that the body is lying in cinnamon and spices and wrapped round with costly linen? It is as if the master of a house should be exiled, and thou wert to adorn the house's walls. Its master is needy and in exile, he is fainting for hunger, and scarcely finds a hut in which to sleep, and thou sayest "He is well off, for his house is garnished;"' cf. *Enarr. in. Ps.* xxxii. 22. According to Jewish notions, it was this very burial which handed him over to his torments; for in the book Sohar it is said: 'The soul which is not righteous abides in this world until the body has been buried: when this is accomplished it is led down to gehenna.'

uttermost rebuke, from Him who allotted to him this character to sustain.[1]

From this verse the scene of the parable passes beyond the range of *our* experience into the unknown world of spirits; but not beyond the range of *his* eye, to whom all worlds, visible and invisible, are equally open and manifest. He

[1] Both these images, that of awakening from a dream of delight, and bringing to an end some proud part in a play, are used by Chrysostom to set forth the altered condition of the Rich Man after his death (*Ad Theod. Laps.* i. 8): 'For as they who toil in the mines, or undergo some other penalty more terrible even than this, whence perchance they fall asleep under their many labours and their most bitter existence, and in dreams behold themselves lapped in delights and in all rich abundance, yet after they are awakened owe no thanks to their dreams; so also that rich man, as in a dream being wealthy for this present life, after his migration hence was punished with that bitter punishment.' And again (*De Laz. Conc.* 11): 'For as on the stage some enter, assuming the masks of kings and captains, physicians and orators, philosophers and soldiers, being in truth nothing of the kind, so also in the present life wealth and poverty are only masks. As then, when thou sittest in the theatre, and beholdest one playing beneath, who sustains the part of a king, thou dost not count him happy, nor esteemest him a king, nor desirest to be such as he; but knowing him to be one of the common people, a ropemaker or a blacksmith, or some other such, thou dost not esteem him happy for his mask and his robe's sake, nor judgest of his condition from these, but holdest him cheap for the meanness of his true condition: so also here, sitting in the world as in a theatre, and beholding men playing as on a stage, when thou seest many rich, count them not to be truly rich, but to be wearing the masks of rich. For as he who on the stage plays the king or captain, is often a slave, or one who sells figs or grapes in the market, so also this rich man is often in reality poorest of all. For if thou strip him of his mask, and unfold his conscience, and scrutinize his inward parts, thou wilt there find a great penury of virtue, thou wilt find him to be indeed the most abject of men. And as in a theatre, when evening is come, and the spectators are departed, and the players go forth from thence, having laid aside their masks and their dresses, then they who before showed as kings and captains to all, appear as they truly are; so now, when death approaches and the audience is dismissed, all laying aside the masks of wealth and of poverty depart from hence, and being judged only by their works, appear some indeed truly rich, but some poor; and some glorious, but others without honour.' Cf. Augustine, *Serm.* cccxlv.; Calderon, *La Vida un Sueño*, and again, *El gran Teatro del Mundo.*

appears as much at home there as here; He moves in that world as one perfectly familiar with it: speaking without astonishment as of things which He knows. He continues, indeed, to use the language of men, for it is the only language by which He could make Himself intelligible to men. Yet it is not always easy now to distinguish between that which is merely figure, vehicle of the truth, and that which must be held fast as itself essential truth.[1] We may safely say that the form in which the sense of pain, with the desire after alleviation, embodies itself (ver. 24), is figurative. Olshausen will have it that the entire dialogue between Abraham and Dives belongs in the same way to the parabolical clothing of the truth; that it is nothing else than the hope and longing after deliverance, which alternately rises and is again crushed by the voice of the condemning law speaking in and through the conscience. But we are left in such entire ignorance of all the conditions of existence in that mysterious world of Hades, that it seems as impossible to affirm this as to deny it.

But to return; he that had that splendid funeral on earth is now '*in hell*,'—or, '*in Hades*' rather, as one may be glad to see the Revised Version has had the courage to render it; for as '*Abraham's bosom*' is not heaven, though it will issue in heaven, so neither is Hades '*hell*,' though to issue in it, when cast with death into the lake of fire, which is the proper hell (Rev. xx. 14). It is the place of painful restraint,[2] where the souls of the wicked are reserved to the judgment of the great day; it is 'the deep,' whither the devils prayed that they might not be sent to be tormented before their time (Luke

[1] Some in Augustine's time took all this to the letter. Tertullian (*De Animâ*, 7) of course had done so; but Augustine has doubts (*De Gen. ad Lit.* viii. 6): 'As to the interpretation of the flame of the nether world, the bosom of Abraham, the tongue of the rich man, the finger of the beggar, the thirst of torment, the drop of cold water, all this is perhaps hardly to be discovered by calm enquirers, and by contentious disputants, never.' Gregory of Nyssa (*De Animâ et Resurr.* vol. iii. pp. 216–221, Paris, 1638) has much of interest on this matter.

[2] Φυλακή, 'prison' (1 Pet. iii. 19) = ἄβυσσος, 'the deep' (Luke viii. 31). See Campbell (*On the Four Gospels*, vol. i. pp. 253–291) on the difference between ᾅδης and γέεννα.

viii. 31); for as Paradise has a foretaste of heaven, so has the place where he is a foretaste of hell. Dives, being there, is '*in torments*,' stripped of all wherein his soul delighted; his purple robe a garment of fire;[1] or as he himself describes it, he is '*tormented in this flame*.'

For a while he may have been quite unable to realize his new condition, to connect his present self with his past: his fearful change seeming to him only as some ugly dream. But when convinced at length that this was indeed no dream, but an awaking, then, that he might take the measure of his actual condition, '*he lift up his eyes, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom*'[2] (cf. Isai. lxv. 13, 14; Luke xiii. 28). If this is merely a figure, yet assuredly a figure of the true, conveying to us the fact that the misery of the lost will be aggravated by a comparison which they will be ever making of their estate with the blessedness of the saved. '*And he cried and said, Father Abraham*,'—for he still clung to the hope that his fleshly privileges would profit him something; he would still plead that he has Abraham to his father (Matt. iii. 9; Rom. ii. 17; John viii. 41), not perceiving that this, his glory once, is now the very stress of his guilt. That he, a son of Abraham,—the man of that liberal hand and princely heart, in whom, as the head of the elect family, every Jew was reminded of his kinship with every other, of the one blood in the veins of all, of the one hope in God which ennobled them all from the least to the greatest—should have so sinned against the mighty privileges of his high calling, so denied all which the name, 'son of Abraham,' was meant to teach him,—it was this which had brought him to that place of torment. Poor and infinitely slight is the best alleviation which he looks for: '*Have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue;*[3] *for I am tormented in this flame*.' And this is all

[1] Augustine (*Serm.* xxxvi. 6): 'To the purple and fine linen succeeded the fire, and he burned in a tunic of which he could not divest himself.'

[2] Ambrose: 'As if in some haven of quiet and retreat of holiness.'

[3] Bengel: 'He had especially sinned by his tongue.'

which he ventures to ask! so shrunken are his desires, so low the highest hope which even he himself presumes to entertain.[1] This prayer of his is the only invocation of saints whereof the Scripture knows; and it is far from being an encouraging one (Job v. 1). He can speak of '*father Abraham*' and his '*father's house;*' but there is another Father of whom he will know nothing—the Father whom the prodigal had found; for he is as far as hell is from heaven from the faith of the prophet: 'Doubtless *thou* art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not' (Isai. lxiii. 16).

'*But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented;*' or '*in anguish,*' as in the latest Revision. In the answer of the Father of the faithful there is no harshness, no mocking at the calamity of his unhappy and guilty descendant. He addresses him as '*Son,*' while at the same time coupling an allowance of the relationship which the other claimed, with a denial of his request, he rings the knell of his latest hope. And first he brings home to his conscience that all which is happening to him now is just, and that he, if he will only consider, must acknowledge this. '*Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.*' I cannot accept the interpretation which by the '*good things*' of Dives understands certain good actions which in some small measure he had wrought, and the reward of which he had in this present life received; even though it can claim such supporters as Chrysostom in the Greek Church,[2] Gregory the Great in the Latin,[3] and Bishop

[1] Augustine: 'The proud man of this life is the beggar of the nether world.'

[2] *De Laz. Con.* 3. He lays a stress on the ἀπέλαβες, *recepisti*, not *accepisti*, *wast paid*, not simply *didst receive*; see too Theophylact (in loc.). Thus far the five other passages of St. Luke, in which ἀπολαμβάνειν occurs (vi. 34, bis; xv. 27; xviii. 30; xxiii. 41), quite bear him out.

[3] *Hom.* 40 *in Evang.*: 'Whereas it is said, Thou wast *paid* good things in thy life, the rich man is shown as having had some good in him, whence in this life he was paid good things. Again, whereas it is

Sanderson in our own. The following paraphrase of the words is from a sermon of Sanderson's: [1] 'If thou hadst anything good in thee, remember thou hast had thy reward in earth already, and now there remaineth for thee nothing but the full punishment of thine ungodliness there in hell: but as for Lazarus, he hath had the chastisement of his infirmities [his "*evil things*"] on earth already, and now remaineth for him nothing but the full reward of his godliness here in heaven.' Presently before Sanderson had said, 'For as God rewardeth those few good things that are in evil men with these temporal benefits, for whom yet in his justice He reserveth eternal damnation, as the due wages, by that justice, of their graceless impenitency, so He punisheth those remnants of sin that are in godly men with these temporal afflictions, for whom yet in his mercy He reserveth eternal salvation, as the due wages, yet by that mercy only, of their faith and repentance and holy obedience.' Whether there be such a dealing of God with men as this or not, it is very far-fetched to find it here; and the more obvious explanation of the words agrees much better with the general scope of the parable, and of Abraham's discourse in particular. The '*good things*' of the rich man were his temporal felicities, his purple and fine linen, and his sumptuous fare. These, which were '*goods*' to him, in his esteem the highest or indeed the only '*goods*,' and besides which he would know no other, he had '*received*.' He had his choice, the things temporal or the things eternal, to save his life here, or to save it there; and by the choice which he had made he must abide.[2]

said of Lazarus that he was paid evil things, assuredly Lazarus is exhibited as having had some evil in him to be purged away. But Lazarus was afflicted and purified by poverty, Dives was rewarded and rejected by his wealth.' Cf. *Moral.* v. 1. In like manner the Jewish doctors said, 'Even as in the world to come to the pious there is repaid a reward for even the lightest good work which they have done, so in this world there is repaid to the impious a reward of every good work however light.'

[1] On Ahab's repentance (1 Kin. xxi. 29).

[2] Augustine: 'O good things of this world that in the nether world are evils.'

This lesson the words, either way interpreted, will contain, namely, that the receiving of this world's good with no admixture of its evil, the course of an unbroken prosperity, is ever a sign and augury of ultimate reprobation [1] (Ps. xvii. 14; Job xxi. 7–21; Luke vi. 24, 25; Heb. xii. 8). Nor is it hard to see why. There is in every man dross in abundance, needing to be purged away, and which can only be purged away in purifying trial fires. He therefore who knows nothing of these purifying fires, is left with all his dross in him, is no partaker of that holiness, without which no man shall see God. Thus Dives, to his endless loss, had in this life received good things without any share of evil.[2] But now all is changed: Lazarus, who received in this mortal life evil things, '*is comforted*' (Matt. v. 4; 2 Cor. iv. 17; Acts xiv. 22), but he is '*tormented.*' He had sown only to the flesh, and therefore, when the order of things has commenced in which the flesh has no part, he can only reap in misery and emptiness, in the hungry longing and unsatisfied desire of the soul (Gal. vi. 8). The pity too which he refused to show, he fails to obtain; so that we have here the severe converse of the beatitude; 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy' (Judg. i. 7; Jer. li. 49; Matt. xviii. 32–34; Jam. ii. 13; Rev. xvi. 6; xviii. 6). The crumbs which he denied to another have issued in the drop of water which is denied to him.[3] Having omitted to make 'himself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness,' now when he has failed, he has none to receive him into everlasting habitations.

Nor is this severe law of the divine retaliations the only obstacle to the granting of his request. There is further brought home to the conscience of this man, once so rich, and now so poor, that with death an eternal separation of the

[1] Augustine: 'What is more hapless than the happiness of sinners?'

[2] Meuschen, *N. T. ex Talm. illust.* p. 66.

[3] Augustine: 'He who gave not a crumb of bread now yearned for a drop of water'—a thought which makes Gregory the Great exclaim (*Hom.* 40 *in Evang.*): 'O how great is the nicety of God's judgments! How strictly is the reward exacted alike of good actions and of bad.'

elements of good and evil, elements in this world mingled and confounded, begins (Matt. xiii. 40, 41). Like is gathered to like, good by natural affinity to good, and evil to evil; and this separation is permanent: '*Beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf*[1] *fixed*,' not a mere handbreadth only, as the Rabbies fabled,[2] but '*a great gulf*,' and this '*fixed*'[3] —an eternal separation, a yawning chasm, too deep to be filled up, too wide to be bridged over;—'*so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.*' The latter statement contains no difficulty; it is only natural that the lost should desire to pass out of their state of pain to the place of rest and blessedness, but it is not so easy to understand the other—'*they who would pass from hence to you cannot*;' for how should any desire this? Not, of course, with a purpose of changing their own condition, but they cannot pass, Abraham would say, even for a season; they have no power to yield even a moment's solace to any in that place, however earnestly they may wish it.

But though repulsed for himself, he has still a request to urge for others. If Abraham cannot send Lazarus to that world of woe, at least he can cause him to return to the earth which he has so lately quitted; between these worlds there is no such gulf interposed: '*I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.*' He and they, Sadducees at heart, though perhaps Pharisees in name, may oftentimes have mocked together at that unseen world,[4] and by Lazarus he

[1] The use of 'gulf' here as a rendering of χάσμα takes us somewhat by surprise; but it is worth while to remember that when the Authorized Version was published, the word 'chasm' did not exist in the English language. Fuller, a good deal later, that is in his *Church History*, writes 'chasma.'

[2] Eisenmenger, *Entdeckt. Judenth.* vol. ii. p. 315.

[3] Augustine (*Ad Evod. Ep.* 164): 'Not only is there a gulf, but it is also fixed.'

[4] Augustine (*Serm.* xli.): 'I make no doubt but that in talking with

would fain warn them now of the fearful reality which he had found it. *He* could testify at once of heaven and of hell.[1] In this anxiety for the welfare of his brethren, which he, who hitherto had been merely selfish, expresses, some have seen the evidence of a better mind beginning, and the proof that suffering was already doing its work in him, and awakening the slumbering germ of good.[2] With this, were it so, would of necessity be connected his own ultimate restoration, and the whole doctrine of future suffering not being vindicative and abiding, but corrective and temporary. But the rich man's request grows out of another root. There lies in it a secret justifying of himself, and accusing of God. What a bitter reproach against God and against the old economy is here involved: 'If only I had been sufficiently warned, if only God had given me sufficiently clear evidence of these things, of the need of repentance, of this place as the goal of a sensual worldly life, I had never come hither. But though I was not, let, at all events, my brethren be duly warned.' Abraham's answer is brief and almost stern; rebuking, as was fit, this evil thought of his heart: they *are* warned; they have enough to keep them from that place of torment, if only they will use it: '*They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them*'[3] (cf. John v. 39, 45–47). Christ putting these words into

his brothers of the prophets and their persuasion unto good and prohibitions of evil, their warnings of future torments and their promises of future rewards, he jested at all these things, and said with his brothers, What life is there after death? What memory is there in corruption? What feeling in ashes? . . . of whom have we heard as returning thence?'

[1] In the legend of Er the Pamphylian (Plato, *Rep.* x. 614), he is to return from the place where souls are judged, 'to be a messenger to men of the things there,' to testify of the greatness of the rewards of the just, the dreadfulness of the doom of sinners.

[2] Aquinas (*Summ. Theol. Supp. ad* 3 *part.* qu. 98, art. 4) has a discussion to which this verse gives occasion: 'Whether the damned in hell wish others to be damned, who are not so?' He determines, despite this passage, that they would.

[3] Bengel: 'This is spoken severely. No one is compelled. We are saved by a faithful hearing, not by apparitions.'

Abraham's mouth, evidently gives no countenance to them who see an entire keeping back of the doctrine of life eternal and a future retribution in the Pentateuch; but to '*hear Moses*,' is to hear of these things; as elsewhere more at length He has shown (Matt. xxii. 31, 32; Luke xx. 27).

But the suppliant will not so easily be silenced. '*Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.*'[1] We are told of the faithful, that 'their works do follow them;' their temper here is their temper in heaven; not otherwise does the contempt of God's word, which this man manifested on earth, follow him beyond the grave.[2] That word, as he deems, is not sufficient to save men; they must have something more to lead them to repentance. We have here reappearing in hell that 'Show us a sign, that we may believe,' so often upon the lips of the Pharisees on earth. They will believe, or flatter themselves that they would believe, signs and portents: but they will not believe God's word (Isai. viii. 19, 20). A vain expectation! '*If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*' Every word in this reply, with which we may profitably compare Isai. viii. 19, demands to be accurately weighed. Dives had said, '*they will repent;*' a moral change will be wrought in them; Abraham replies, they will not even '*be persuaded.*' Dives had said, '*if one went unto them from the dead;*' Abraham, with a prophetic glance at the world's unbelief in a far greater matter, makes answer, 'No, not *though one rose from the dead.*' He in fact is saying: 'A far mightier miracle than you demand would be ineffectual for producing a far slighter effect: you imagine that wicked men would *repent* on the return of a spirit,'—the history of the last days of Saul might have taught him better (1 Sam. xxviii.),—'I tell

[1] Gregory of Nyssa: 'That the message might gain persuasiveness from its unexpectedness.'

[2] Bengel: 'When he had left his luxury behind, the wretched man carried his contempt of Scripture with him in hell.'

you they would not even *be persuaded* by the rising of one from the dead.' [1]

This reply of Abraham is most important for the insight it gives us into the nature of faith as a moral act; not therefore to be forced by signs and wonders: for where there is a determined alienation of will and affections from the truth, no impression which miracles will make, even when accepted as genuine, will be more than transient. There will always be a loophole somewhere or other by which unbelief can escape; [2] and this is well, else we should have in the Church the faith of devils, who believe and tremble (Jam. ii. 9). When the historical Lazarus was raised from the dead, the Pharisees were not by this mightiest of all miracles persuaded of the divine mission and authority of Him who had raised him; and this though they did not deny the reality of the miracle itself (John xi. 47; xii. 10). A greater too than Lazarus has returned from the world of spirits; nay, He has risen from the dead; and what multitudes, who acknowledge the fact, and acknowledge it as setting a seal to all his claims to be heard and obeyed, are not brought by this acknowledgment a whit nearer to repentance and the obedience of faith. And it is very observable, how exactly in the spirit of Abraham's refusal to send Lazarus, the Lord Himself acted after his resurrection. He showed Himself, not to the Pharisees, not to his enemies, 'not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God' (Acts x. 41), to his own disciples alone. It was a judgment upon others, that no sign should be given them but the sign of the prophet Jonas (Matt. xii. 39); and yet it was mercy too, for they would not have been

[1] Observe the change of words: πορευθῇ in the request of Dives, ἀναστῇ in the reply of Abraham; ἀπὸ νεκρῶν in the request, ἐκ νεκρῶν in the reply.

[2] When, for instance, Spinoza declared himself ready to renounce his system and to become a Christian, if only he were convinced of the truth of the raising of the historical Lazarus, he must have known very well that in his sense of the word *convince*, and with the kind of evidence that he would demand, it was impossible to satisfy his demand (see Bayle, *Diction.* art. Spinoze, note B).

persuaded even by one that had risen from the dead.[1] A satisfaction of the longing, in itself most natural, that one should return from the world beyond the grave, and assure us of the reality of that world,—a satisfaction which Abraham could not give,—was by Christ granted to those who were seeking the confirmation of faith, and not an excuse for unbelief.[2]

I have alluded already (p. 455) to an interpretation of this Scripture, which, if admitted, would restore it at once to its full rights as a parable, even according to the strictest definition of such; for the purely historical or narrative character of it would quite disappear, an allegorical and prophetic taking its room. The interpretation of which I speak, though never the predominant one, has frequently made itself heard, having found more or less favour with Augustine, with Gregory the Great, and with modern commentators not a few. Should it obtain allowance, the parable, like so many others which we owe exclusively to St. Luke,

[1] I cannot forbear to quote here some admirable remarks in Sepp's *Leben Jesu Christi*, vol. v. p. 486: 'From this parable of Christ there further proceeds a lesson for modern times. The dead rise not up, neither by God's will do spirits reveal themselves by table-turning, writing, or word of mouth, for Christ saith: "They have Moses and the prophets, if they hear not these, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." The Lord is here speaking warningly, to the end that the Christian should not reckon on communications from the further world or from the kingdom of the dead. Such apparitions can never possibly lead to any faith pleasing to God: and in truth there is no lawful intercourse between this and the other side of the grave. The Jews had Moses and the Prophets to listen to: we have Christ and the Apostles, or all the Holy Church. Therefore let no man build on the revelations of necromancy or the like, unless he would join himself with an unholy power that is alien to Christ.'

[2] Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* cxlvii. 14): 'Thanks be to thee, O Lord, for thy compassion: thou wast pleased to die that one might rise from the dead, and this one not anyone, but it was Truth itself which so rose.' Plato's legend of the *revenant*, referred to already (p. 474, note), is a remarkable witness for this craving in the mind of man, that he who gives assurance of a world after death should have himself visited that world. The same reappears in that, which, however, is an evident imitation of Plato's narrative, the story of Thespesius in Plutarch's admirable essay, *De Serâ Numinis Vindictâ*.

will set forth the past and future relations of the Jew and the Gentile. Dives will in this case represent the Jewish nation, arrayed in the '*purple*' of the king, and the '*fine linen*' of the priest—the kingdom of priests, or royal priesthood (Exod. xix. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 9). Of this elect people it might be truly said that they '*fared sumptuously every day*,' being furnished to the full with all things necessary for life and godliness. Salvation was of the Jews (John iv. 22); to them pertained 'the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises' (Rom. ix. 4).[1] But while all this was so

[1] Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.* ii. qu. 32): 'In Dives we must see the proud among the Jews, who knew not the righteousness of God, and desired to set up their own. The splendid feasting is the boastfulness of the law in which they gloried, rather abusing it for the vain shows of pride, than using it for the need of salvation.' Cf. Gregory the Great (*Hom.* 40 *in Evang.*; *Mor.* xxv. 13): 'By the rich man feasting splendidly is denoted the Jewish people, who received the abundance of the law not unto the needs of salvation, but unto the vain shows of pride, not modestly refreshing themselves in the words of its commandments, but making boasting display. By the beggar full of sores, whose name, Lazarus, is by interpretation "he that is helped," the nature of the Gentile people is expressed, whom the divine help exalts in proportion as they are more distrustful of the sufficiency of their own powers.' And H. de Sto. Victore (*Annott. in Luc.*): 'Here the rich man denotes the Jewish people, who outwardly had all the cultivation of life, and used the delights of the law committed to them, not unto edification but unto display.' Theophylact: 'He was clad in purple and fine linen, having the kingship and the priesthood.' Lomeier has wrought out this view at length, *Obss. Analytico-Didact. ad Luc.* xvi. p. 91, seq. Von Meyer (*Blätter für höhere Wahrheit*, vol. vi. p. 88) has an exposition identical with this in its spirit; and Bengel: 'Dives is a type of the Pharisees, Lazarus an example of the poor in spirit.' Teelman (*Comm. Crit. et Theol. in Luc.* xvi. Amstel. 1695) offers an elaborate explanation, like in part, but with important differences. Dives is the Jewish people, but Lazarus is Christ, rejected and despised by the proud nation, and full of sores, bearing, that is, his people's sins (Isai. liii. 3–5). With him agree Vitringa (*Erklär. der Parab.* p. 939) and Gill (*Exp. of the N. T.* in loc.). But this was long since suggested by Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.* ii. qu. 38): 'We must take Lazarus as signifying the Lord . . . who lies at the rich man's door, inasmuch as by the humility of his Incarnation He cast himself down before the haughty hearing of the Jews (2 Cor. viii. 9).

richly their portion, they, instead of imparting of it to those who needed it the most, were at all pains that no share of it should reach any others; or, if they did make a proselyte, they made him not for God but for themselves, and he reproduced in exaggerated form all that was worst in themselves (Matt. xxiii. 15). Making their boast of God (Rom. ii. 17), they did nothing to spread among the heathen the true knowledge of his name.[1] Others, if fed at all, were fed only from the crumbs which fell from their table. Lazarus, the beggar,[2] lay untended at their gate—at their gate and without it; for the Gentiles were 'aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise' (Ephes. ii. 12):—'*full of sores*,' for their sins and their miseries were infinite. St. Paul, at Rom. i. 23–32, gives us a fearful glimpse of some of the worst among those sores, though indeed we must include in them not sins only, but all the penal miseries consequent on sin. '*And the dogs came and licked their sores*,' and this was all the alleviation which they had. They were slight

. . . The sores of the beggar are the sufferings of the Lord from the infirmity of the flesh which for our sake He deigned to take upon him . . . The bosom of Abraham is the sanctuary of the Father, whither after his passion the risen Lord was taken up.' Compare Ambrose (*Exp. in Luc.* viii. 15): 'To whom also [*i.e.* Lazarus] I account him as like, since, beaten often-times by the Jews, for the patience of believers and the calling of the Gentiles He offered the sores of his body to be licked as if by dogs;' then he quotes Matt. xv. 27.—Schleiermacher's supposition that Herod Antipas, infamous for his incestuous marriage (see ver. 18), is pointed at in Dives, is curious, yet even this is not original; for Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* iv. 34) sees at ver. 18 an allusion to Herod's marriage, and observes how close the connexion between that verse and our parable: 'For the parable as far as the surface of the Scripture is concerned was put forth suddenly, and as regards the aim of its import it agrees with the mention of the bad treatment of John, and of his affronting Herod for his evil marriage, describing the end of both, the torments of Herod and the refreshment of John.' See Suicer, *Thes.* s. v. Λάζαρος.

[1] H. de Sto. Victore: 'They held the teaching of the law not unto charity but unto elation.' And Gregory the Great (*Hom.* 40) explains the refusal of the crumbs: 'The Jews in their pride did not admit the Gentiles to a knowledge of the law.'

[2] Theophylact: 'The poor man of heavenly graces and wisdom.'

and miserable assuagements of its want and woe, ineffectual medicine for its hurts, which the heathen world obtained from its legislators, philosophers, and poets. 'Physicians of *no* value' we must not call them; for the moral condition of the world would have been far worse without them; but yet they could only heal slightly at the best the hurt of their people.

The desire of the beggar to be fed with crumbs from the rich man's table, finds no exact counterpart in any longing on the part of the Gentiles for the satisfaction of their spiritual hunger from the table of the Jews. Such longing there might have been, if these had held, and held forth, the truth as they ought. But, whether from the repulsive aspect under which they presented it, or from some other causes, this desire did not in any large measure exist; though, indeed, the spread of Judaism, and the inclination, especially among women of rank, to embrace it, is more than once noted by Roman writers about the time of the first emperors.[1] Still the yearning of men's souls after a truth which they had not, was a yearning after something which the Jew had, and had richly; and which, had he been faithful to his position, he would have imparted to them, and they would have been willing to receive of him. Christ was 'the Desire of *all* nations;' and thus there was no yearning after deliverance from the bondage of corruption which was not in truth a yearning after Him; so that *implicitly* and unconsciously the nations of the world were desiring to live upon truth which had been entrusted to the Jew, and entrusted to him that he might share it with them.

The dying of Lazarus, with his reception into Abraham's bosom, will find their counterpart in the coming to an end of that economy in which the Gentile was an alien from the covenant, and in his subsequent introduction by '*the angels*,' or messengers of the covenant, into all the immunities and consolations of the kingdom of God;—'which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy' (1 Pet. i.

[1] See Neander, *History of the Church*, vol. i. p. 84 (English transl.).

10; Ephes. ii. 11–13). But Dives dies also; the coming to an end of that preparatory economy, being life to the Gentile, is death to the Jew, who had desperately clung to this, and who would know of no other. And now Dives is in torments, —'*in hell*;' surely not too strong a phrase to describe the anguish and despair, the madness and astonishment of heart, which must be their portion who, having once known God, refuse to know Him any more. Who can read the history, as given by the great Jewish historian, of the final agony of his nation,—when turning fiercely upon its foes, it turned with a yet more deadly rage upon itself; like a scorpion, which, girdled with fire, fixes its sting in its own body,—and not feel that all which constitutes hell was already there? And ever since have they not been '*tormented*'? What a picture of their condition as the apostate people of God does the sure word of prophecy supply (Lev. xxvi. 14–39; Deut. xxviii. 15–68). What gnashing of teeth, what madness of heart, does Christ announce shall be theirs, when they shall see the despised Gentiles sitting down in the kingdom of God, from which they themselves are excluded [1] (Luke xiii. 28–30). Nor has history failed to justify these pictures to the full. What a commentary on all this does the whole medieval history, with its record of all the ignominy and shame, all the frightful indignities and outrages, inflicted on the Jewish race during all those ages, supply; nor despite of all our vaunted toleration have we even now seen the last of these.

But as Dives looked for some consolation from Lazarus, whom before he despised, so the Jew is looking for the assuagement of his miseries through some bettering of his outward estate,—some relaxation of severities, inflicted upon him,—some improvements in his civil condition:—expecting from the kingdoms of the world that which, even if they gave, would be but as a drop of water on the burning tongue. For it is the wrath of God which constitutes his misery; and till this is removed, till he turns from Abraham to Abraham's God, he is incapable of true consolation. The alleviation

[1] Theophylact: 'They are consumed in the flame of envy.'

which he craves is not given; it had been useless to give it. There is but one true alleviation, that he should be himself received into the kingdom of God, that he should bewail his guilt, and look on Him whom he pierced, and mourn because of Him. The true consolations would abound to him then. Whatever is short of this is nothing. The upholders of this interpretation urge, and with reason, that the absence of any allusion in the parable to a future time, when the '*great gulf*' of unbelief which now separates the Jew from his blessings shall be filled up, makes nothing against it. The same silence is observed in the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen (Matt. xxi. 33). No hint is there given that the vineyard shall one day be restored to its first cultivators, which yet we know will be the case (Rom. xi. 26; 2 Cor. iii. 16).

By the '*five brethren*' of Dives will be set forth to us, according to this scheme, all who hereafter, in a like condition and with like advantages, are tempted to the same abuse of their spiritual privileges. The Gentile Church is in one sense Lazarus brought into Abraham's bosom; but when it sins as the Jewish Church did before it, glorying in its gifts, but not using them for the calling out of the spiritual life of men, contented to see in its very bosom a population outcast, save in name, from its privileges and blessings, and beyond its limits millions upon millions of heathens to whom it has little or no care to impart the riches of the knowledge of Christ,—then, as it thus sins, it only too much resembles the five brethren of Dives, who are in danger of coming, and for sins similar to his, to the same '*place of torment*.' Nor are we to imagine that, before judgment is executed upon a Church thus forgetful of its high calling, it will be roused from its dream of security by any startling summonses,—any novel signs and wonders,—any new revelation,—any Lazarus rising from the dead and bidding it to repent. It has enough to remind it of its duty; its deposit of truth, its talent wherewith to trade till its Lord's return. The parable thus contemplated, speaks to us Gentiles in the very spirit of those awful words

which St. Paul addressed to the Gentile converts at Rome: 'Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off' (Rom. xi. 22).

Those who uphold this allegorical interpretation maintain that the parable will not, through admitting it, lose any of its practical value. Whatever, according to the more usual interpretation, might be drawn from it of solemn warning for the children of this present world, who have faith in nothing beyond it,—for all who forget, in the fulness of their own earthly goods, the infinite want and woe of their fellow-men, the same may be drawn from it still. Only, superadded to this warning to the world, it will yield another and still more solemn warning to the Church, that it do not shut itself up in selfish pride; glorying in the multitude of its own privileges but at the same time with no feeling sense of the spiritual wants and miseries of those who know not God, with no earnest effort to remove these distresses; that on such forgetfulness a terrible judgment must follow.

PARABLE XXVII.

UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS.

LUKE xvii. 7–10.

IT has been much debated whether any connexion at all is to be traced, and if any, what connexion, between this parable and its immediate context. Expositors not a few have either expressly denied that any such existed, or have, at all events, been at no pains to trace it. Those, on the other hand, who assert a connexion, do not always trace the same. Thus Augustine, who acknowledges the difficulty which meets him here, has a singular scheme for linking on the parable with that which went before it, and one very forced and unnatural. I must be content to refer to it,[1] as fairly to state it would occupy more space than its merits warrant. Theophylact finds the following link between the parable and the verse preceding. The Lord had there declared the mighty works which a living faith would enable his disciples to perform; but then, lest a knowledge of this should entangle them in a snare of pride, a parable which should keep them humble is added.[2] Olshausen suggests as follows. The Apostles by that account of the hindrances they would meet (ver. 1, 2), of the hard duties, hard as then they seemed, which were required of them (ver. 3, 4), had a longing awakened in them

[1] *Quæst. Evang.* ii. 39.

[2] So Cajetan: 'The Apostles had sought that the gift of faith might be added to them, and we understand that it was so given. And since also pride lies in wait for good works to destroy them, therefore Jesus adds this parable to keep the Apostles in the true knowledge of themselves, so that they be not lifted up.

after a speedier rest and reward. The Lord will make them understand that their work, difficult or not, welcome or unwelcome, must be done; that they are not their own, but his, and set to labour for Him: if they found their labour a delight, well; but if not, it was not the less to be accomplished. Instead of looking for recompense and release from toil at once, they should take example of the servant, who, albeit he had been strenuously labouring all the day long in the field, '*plowing or feeding cattle*,' yet not the less, when he returned to the house, resumed his labours there. Doubtless this is an important truth, and one involved in the parable; but that, '*Lord, increase our faith*,' or, '*Lord, give to us more faith*,' which calls it out, involves no such meaning as Olshausen traces in it; I cannot recognize in this petition the voice of those desirous of escaping a dispensation committed to them, or snatching prematurely at a reward.

Altogether different from these interpretations, and suggesting a quite different connexion, is one first proposed by Grotius; and by Venema[1] taken up and strengthened with additional arguments and illustrations. The parable, they say, does not represent at all the standing of the faithful under the New Covenant or 'perfect law of liberty,' but the merely servile standing of the Jew under the old; and it grew in this manner out of the discourse preceding. The disciples had asked for increase of faith. The Lord, who will grant their request, will at the same time magnify the value of the gift which they ask. That value is so transcendent that all works done without this living principle of obedience are merely servile, and justly recompensed with a merely servile reward; God taking no pleasure in them, and counting that He owes no thanks for them; they who bring such to pass being '*unprofitable servants*' after all. They object to any other interpretation, that it sets in a light which is not that of the New Covenant the relations of Christ and his people. Is it likely, they ask, that the same gracious Lord who elsewhere has said, 'Henceforth I call you not servants, . . . but

[1] *Diss. Sac.* p. 262, seq.

I have called you friends,' should here seek to bring them under bondage again? should put them in relations with Himself not filial but servile: beforehand declaring that, however much they might labour for Him, He would owe them no thanks for all? How, they demand, does this agree either with the spirit or the letter of words such as these, 'Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily, I say unto you, *that he shall gird himself*, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them' (Luke xii. 37)? But all these embarrassments, they affirm disappear, so soon as the parable is regarded as setting forth the relation of the Jewish people to God. They were hired to do a certain work, which if they did, they were, like servants, free from stripes; they ate and drank; they received their earthly reward. But advancing no further than to this bare fulfilling of things expressly enjoined[1] them, and fulfilling even these without love or zeal or the filial spirit of faith, stopping short so soon as ever they dared, and serving in the oldness of the letter, they were '*unprofitable servants*,' in whom their Lord could take no pleasure, and who could look for no further marks of favour at his hands.[2]

[1] Origen (*In Rom.* iii.) lays the same stress on τὰ διαταχθέντα, though his purpose is different: 'Until a man has done his duty, *i.e.* all that is commanded him, he is an unprofitable servant (Luc. xvii. 10). But if thou addest aught to what is commanded, then thou wilt be no longer an unprofitable servant, but it shall be said to thee, "'Well done, good and faithful servant'' (Matt. xxv. 21).' Bernard too (*In Cant. Serm.* xi. 2), without making Origen's dangerous use of the passage, and lowering the standard of obedience for the ninety-nine, in the hope of exalting it for the one, has implicitly the same explanation. He is speaking, on Cant. i. 2, of a service, rendered indeed, but without alacrity or joy, and ends thus: 'Lastly in the Gospel he who does only that which it is his duty to do is accounted an unprofitable servant. It may be that after a fashion I fulfil the commandments, but amid them all my soul is like a land without water. In order therefore that my sacrifice may be made fat, my prayer is, let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.' So too Jeremy Taylor, *The Doctrine and Practice of Repentance*, i. 4, 15.

[2] Grotius (in loc.) is rich in materials in support of this interpretation. We might add to these one of the *Similitudes* in the *Shepherd* of Hermas (iii. sim. 5), which is briefly this: A householder planted a vineyard,

All this is ingeniously and plausibly urged; and yet does not carry such conviction with it as need compel us to go back from the ordinary exposition. I shall attempt in the interpretation to meet the difficulties which have thus been urged. It is thus that the parable commences: '*But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?*' Before proceeding any further let me observe that '*by and by*' does not at this present mean exactly the same which it meant when our Version was made. It was then equivalent to 'straightway' (thus compare Mark vi. 25; Luke xxi. 9); and is used with this meaning here. The purpose of the verse is obscured for the English reader by this change in the force of the phrase, as becomes evident, if we substitute '*straightway*' for it. But to attain the exact sense of the original it will need further to join this '*by and by*,' or this '*straightway*,' with the command which follows it, '*Go straight way, and sit down to meat*,' and not with '*say*,' which went before. '*And will not rather say unto him, Make ready*

and going from home, left his servant the task of tying the vines to their supports, and no more; but the servant having finished this task, thought it would profit the vineyard, if also he were to weed it and dig it, which he did; and the master found it in high order and beauty on his return. Well pleased with his servant, because he had thus done more than was enjoined him, he determined to give him the adoption of sonship, and to make him fellow-heir with his own son. Seneca (*De Benef.* iii. 18–28) treats an interesting question bearing on the present subject: 'Can a slave confer a kindness upon his lord?' which he answers in the affirmative: 'So long as he renders that which is wont to be exacted from slaves [τὰ διαταχθέντα] it is service, but when he does more than it is needful for a slave to do, it is kindness: as soon as it attains to the affection of a friend, it ceases to be called service. . . . Whatever exceeds the rule of a slave's duty, whatever is rendered not as commanded but from goodwill, is a kindness.' This interpretation is Wetstein's as well: 'There are servants who serve in a servile spirit, that is, who do nothing unless they are bid: there are others who serve in a spirit of freedom even as sons. These, without waiting for a command, out of the goodness and nobility of their disposition, do of their own accord and unbidden such things as they believe will be useful and pleasing to the Lord. It is the former class whom Christ here chides and rebukes, to the end that He may lead his disciples to the higher grade.'

wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken, and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?' To wait at table with the dress succinct or girded up, was a mark of servitude,[1] to keep which in mind enhances the condescension of the Son of God in his saying (Luke xii. 37), and in his doing (John xiii. 4). *'Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say,*[2] *We are unprofitable*[3] *servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.'*

To recur to the objections of Grotius and Venema; no doubt the relations of the faithful to their Lord *are* set forth here under a less gracious aspect than is usual in the New Covenant. And yet this word of our Lord need not be opposed to such other words of his as that which was just now urged (Luke xii. 37). It should rather be accepted as furnishing the counterweight and complement of all such. This is the way God *might* deal; for it is not asserted that thus He *will* deal; since rather that other is the manner in which He will actually bear Himself towards his faithful servants. One relation according to the strictness of justice He *might* assume; the other, according to the riches of his grace, He *will* assume. We, to keep us humble, are evermore to acknowledge that upon that footing He might put all our service done to Him, having at the same time this assurance, that so long as we put it upon this footing, He will not; because so long, we, continuing in our humility, are capable of receiving his favours without being corrupted by them. And

[1] Philo (*De Vit. Cont.* § 9) tells us of the Egyptian Therapeutæ: 'Those who are to serve will enter ungirt and with flowing robes, that they may bring to this feast no appearance of slavish garb.'

[2] Bengel: 'Hapless is he whom the Lord calls an unprofitable servant (Matt. xxv. 30), happy he who so calls himself.'

[3] On the distinction between ἀχρεῖος, occurring only here and at Matt. xxv. 30, and ἄχρηστος, occurring only at Philemon 11, see a quotation from Tittmann in my *Synonyms of the N. T.*, p. 394. The former is more negatively, the latter more positively and actively bad. None of our Versions, from Wiclif to the latest, attempt any distinction between the words.

assuredly the experience of every heart will attest how necessary this aspect of the truth, as well as the other; how needful that in hours when we are tempted to draw back, to shun and evade our tasks, we should then feel that a necessity is laid upon us; that, indeed, while we do them willingly, we do them also the most acceptably; yet, whether willingly or not, they must be done; that we are servants, who are not to question our Master's will, but to fulfil it. Good for us it is to be reminded of this in such moments, and thus kept in the way of duty, till the time of a more joyful and childlike obedience again comes round.[1] When too, because we have accomplished some little work, we count that we may straightway take our ease, and regard our 'Well done' as already gained, very profitable will be then the warning of the parable, the example of the hind, who having laboured all day in the field, resumes his labours in the house, and only looks to rest and refresh himself, when his master has no further need of his service; good for us that, in the words of the Son of Sirach, we learn to 'wax old in our work' (xi. 20), and, so long as we are here, see in one task completed but a stepping-stone to another which shall be begun; ever as we have surmounted one hill of labour, perceiving a new one rising above it, and girding ourselves for the surmounting of that as well. Well for us, too, is it to know and to confess that we are not doing God a favour in serving Him, but He the highest favour to us in enabling us to this service; and that He, graciously accepting our work and rewarding it, does this solely out of the freedom and riches of his grace; adding to it a worth which of itself it does not possess; that there is another footing, that namely of the parable, upon which He might have put all—yea, upon which, though *He* does not, yet *we* must evermore

[1] Guerricus (*Bernardi Opp.* vol. ii. p. 1028, ed. Bened.): 'For that fear which is purified by love takes not joy away, but preserves it; it does not destroy, but builds up; it does not embitter, but seasons; the greater the modesty, the greater the lastingness; the greater the severity, the greater the truth; the greater the holiness, the greater the sweetness.'

put it, so far as this may be needful for the subduing of every motion of pride and vain-glory, every temptation to bring in God as our debtor—which we evermore are doing, or are on the point of doing.[1]

Effectual medicine against this disease of pride and vain-glory, the words which Christ here places in the mouth of his disciples will supply ;[2] for if, when they have '*done all*,' they shall still confess, '*We are unprofitable servants*' (cf. Job xxii. 2, 3 ; xxxv. 7, 8 ; Ps. xvi. 2), how much more, and with how far deeper self-abasement and shame, when their consciences bear them witness, as the conscience of every man enlightened by the Spirit of God must bear witness to him, that so far from having done all that was commanded, they have in innumerable things grievously failed and come short of their duty, of what they might and ought to have done.[3]

[1] Ambrose (*Exp. in Luc.* viii. 32) : 'Recognize that thou art a servant bound by many duties. Exalt not thyself because thou art called a son of God : thou must recognize the grace shewn thee, thou must not ignore thine own nature. Boast not thyself if thou hast served well, as it was thy duty to do. The sun is submissive, the moon obedient, angels serve. . . . Let us not, therefore, ask praise of ourselves, neither let us forestall the judgment of God, or anticipate the sentence of the judge : let us wait each his own time and his own judge.'

[2] Augustine : 'Struggling diligently against the plague of vain-gloriousness.'

[3] Cajetan : 'By the words, "When ye have done all," it is not said that they would do all, but that even if they do all things, even if they have the merits of those who do all those things that are commanded, let them still recognize themselves as unprofitable servants ; so that *a fortiori* they should recognize themselves as worse than unprofitable, that is, as debtors in and guilty of many things, which they ought to have done or ought to do.'—Our Church in her 14th Article has used this parable against the Romish doctrine of works of supererogation. Cf. Gerhard, *Loc. Theoll.* loc. xviii. 8, 91.

PARABLE XXVIII.

THE UNJUST JUDGE.

LUKE xviii. 1-8.

THIS parable, addressed to the disciples, stands in closest relation with all which has just gone before; with the announcement of those times of tribulation, when disciples themselves 'should desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and should not see it' (xvii. 22). Then, according to the deeply significant language of the Jewish schools, allowed and adopted by our Lord (Matt. xxiv. 8; cf. John xvi. 21; Rom. viii. 22), will be the birth-pangs of the new creation; and the distresses which shall then come to a head, and which, always felt, shall then be felt more intensely than ever, are here set forth as the motive for persevering prayer. '*He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray*,' that it behoved them always to pray, if they would escape the things coming on the earth. It is not so much the duty, as the absolute necessity, of instant persevering prayer that is here proclaimed;[1] while in the further words, '*and not to faint*,' there are open to us glimpses into the inmost mystery of prayer.

We shall scarcely err in taking these words as words of Christ Himself, rather than of the Evangelist commenting by

[1] Chrysostom, in two sermons (*De Precatione*) on this parable, has much which is beautiful on prayer. It is the medicine expelling spiritual sicknesses—the foundation of the spiritual building—that to the soul which the nerves are to the body. The man without prayer is as the fish out of water, and gasping for life—as a city without walls, and open to all assaults;—but from him that is armed with prayer the tempter starts back, as midnight robbers start back when they see a sword suspended over a soldier's bed.

way of preface on the parable which he is about to record. Christ spake the parable, and at the same time announced the object with which He spake it; namely, '*that men ought always to pray*,[1] *and not to faint*.' But, some may ask, is there not exaggeration here? Must not this command be taken with very large abatements indeed? Not when we understand of prayer as the continual desire of the soul after God; having, it is true, seasons of an intenser and more concentrated earnestness, but by no means restricted to these seasons; since the whole life of the faithful should be, in Origen's beautiful words, 'one great connected prayer,'—prayer, as St. Basil expresses it, being the salt which should salt everything else in the life. 'That soul,' says Donne, 'that is accustomed to direct herself to God upon every occasion, that, as a flower at sunrising, conceives a sense of God in every beam of his, and spreads and dilates itself towards Him, in a thankfulness, in every small blessing that He sheds upon her, . . . that soul which, whatsoever string be stricken in her, bass or treble, her high or her low estate, is ever tuned towards God, that soul prays sometimes when it does not know that it prays.'[2] Admirable are Augustine's utterances on this matter, drawn from the depths of his own Christian experience. Thus in one place: 'It was not for nothing that the Apostle said, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. v. 17). Can we indeed without ceasing bend the knee, bow the body, or lift up the hands, that he should say, "Pray without ceasing"? There is another interior prayer without intermission, and that is the longing of thy heart. Whatever else thou mayest be doing, if thou longest after that Sabbath of God, thou dost not intermit to pray. If thou wishest not to intermit to pray, see that thou do not intermit to desire; thy continual desire is thy continual voice. Thou wilt be silent, if thou leave off to love; for they were silent of whom it is written, "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." The coldness of

[1] Tirinus: 'Despite weariness, fear, and temptation.'

[2] *Sermon* xi., *On the Purification.*

love is the silence of the heart; the fervency of love is the cry of the heart.'[1]

With this introduction, indicating the drift and intention of the parable, the Lord proceeds: '*There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man.*' Two strokes describe the reckless and desperate character of the man. He '*feared not God*;' all that God's law had spoken of the awfulness of the judge's charge, of the guilt and punishment of the unrighteous judge, he set at nought (Exod. xxiii. 6–9; Lev. xix. 15; Deut. i. 16, 17; 2 Chron. xix. 6, 7). Nor was it only that higher motive, the fear of God, which he lacked, but its poor and miserable substitute, respect for the opinion of the world, was equally inoperative with him. Some rise above this respect for the opinion of men; others fall below it, and he was one of these; and, worst sign of all, he dared to avow all this to himself (see ver. 4). And it is with such a judge as this that the Judge of all the earth is likened here! None might have ventured upon this comparison, it would have been overbold on the lips of any, save only of the Son of God. Yet with all this we must beware of seeking to extenuate his unrighteousness,—as some by various forced constructions have sought to do.[2] So far from this,

[1] *Enarr. in Ps.* xxxvii. 10: 'Thy very desire is thy prayer, and if thy desire is continual, thy prayer also is continual. . . . If love grows cold, the heart is silent: if love is burning, the heart cries aloud;' and elsewhere: 'The whole life of the good Christian is a holy desire;' and again: 'Thy tongue gives praise hourly, let thy life give praise always.' Cf. *Ep.* cxxx. 8. Ἐκκακεῖν is a favourite word with St. Paul; outside St. Paul's writings, here only in the New Testament. Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* lxv. 20) warns against the danger of this '*fainting*': 'Many grow faint in prayer, and in the newness of their conversion pray fervently, afterwards faintly, afterwards coldly, afterwards carelessly; as though they are become presumptuous. The enemy watches, and thou art sleeping. . . . Therefore let us not fail in prayer; He takes not away, though He may defer, that which He will grant.'

[2] For a monstrous attempt to get rid of the ἀδικία of the judge, see Theophylact (in loc.); it is not approved by him: cf. Pseudo-Athanasius (*De Parab. Script.* qu. 30), and Suicers, *Thes.* s. v. κριτής. It can only be matched by the explanation of Nathan's parable of the Ewe Lamb (2 Sam. xii. 1) given by Ambrose (*Apol. Proph. David*, 5).

the worse that we think of him, the more encouragement does the parable contain, the stronger the argument for unwearied persistency in prayer becomes. If a bad man will yield to the mere force of the importunity which he hates, how much more certainly will a righteous God be prevailed on by the faithful prayer which He loves.[1] The unrighteousness of the judge is not an accident, cleaving to the earthly form under which the heavenly truth is set forth, such as would have been got rid of, if it conveniently might; but is rather a circumstance deliberately chosen for the stronger setting forth of that truth,—which truth indeed would not have been set forth at all without it.

'*And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.*' We have heard the character of the judge; we may conceive therefore how hopeless the case of a suppliant at once weak and poor,—weak, so that she could not compel him to do her justice,—and poor, with no bribe to offer which should induce him to brave for her sake the resentment of formidable adversaries. Such, no doubt, is the widow of the parable, one 'that is a widow indeed and desolate.' The exceeding desolation of the state of widowhood in the East has been often noticed, and the obviousness of the widow, as one having none to help her, to all manner of oppressions and wrongs;[2] from hence the numerous warnings against such oppression with which Scripture abounds (Exod. xxii. 22; Deut. x. 18; xxiv. 17; xxvii. 19; Job xxii. 9; Isai. i. 23; Prov. xv. 25; Mal. iii. 5). Very fitly does a widow such as this represent the Church

[1] Augustine (*Serm.* cxv. 1): 'If therefore he who hated her prayer yet listened to it, how, think you, does He listen who bids us pray?' and Tertullian, on the holy violence of prayer: 'This violence is pleasing to God.' Clemens too (Potter's ed. p. 947): 'God rejoices when thus overcome.'

[2] For instance, Ward, in his *Illustrations of Scripture from the Manners and Customs of the Hindoos.* Thus too Terence:

> Non, ita me Dii ament, auderet facere hæc viduæ mulieri,
> Quæ in me fecit.

'By heaven, he would not dare to treat a widow as he has treated me.'

under persecution,[1] under that persecution which never ceases, the oppression from an adverse element in which she draws her breath. Nor is it only the Church at large which by this widow is represented here, but every single soul in conflict with those spiritual powers which are arrayed against the truth. The '*adversary*' will in either case be the prince of the darkness of this world, the head of all which is fighting against the manifestation of the kingdom of God, either in a single soul, or in the world; the spiritual Herod, who is ever seeking to destroy the heavenly child. But the elect, who' having the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within themselves, waiting their perfect redemption, are here represented as struggling with those adverse powers, as oppressed by them; under the sense of this oppression, and of their helplessness to effect their own deliverance, crying mightily for aid, for the revelation of the Son of man in his glory,—exclaiming with the prophet, 'Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down' (Isai. lxiv. 1); for they know that not till then shall the wicked fall and not rise again, and the Church be set free for ever from all her foes. We apprehend too slightly those cries for deliverance whereof Psalms and prophets are full, when we restrain them to special outward afflictions or persecutions which the Church or any of her members are enduring. The world is *always*, consciously or unconsciously, by flattery or by hostile violence, oppressing the Church; and Satan evermore seeking to hinder the manifestation of the life of God in every one of its members. Prayer is the cry *de profundis* which the elect utter, the calling in of a mightier to aid, when the danger is urgent lest the enemy should prevail. And the widow's prayer, '*Avenge me of mine adversary*,' wonderfully expresses the relation in

[1] Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* cxxxi. 15): 'Every soul which understands that it is forsaken of all help save of God alone, is a widow; . . . every Church is as a widow, forsaken in this world; that is, if this is felt, if the widowhood is recognized; for then is help nigh at hand;' and *Quæst. Evang.* ii. qu. 45: 'This widow may bear a likeness to the Church, which seems desolate until the Lord come, who yet in secret even now is watching over her.' Cf. Isai. liv. 1–8.

which we stand to the evil with which we contend;—that it is not our very self, but an alien power, holding us in bondage,—not the very 'I,' as St. Paul (Rom. vii.) is so careful to assert, for then redemption would be impossible, but sin which, having entered in, would now keep us in bondage. It is the Spirit's work to make men feel this distinctness between themselves and the evil which is in them; the new creation in this resembling the old, that it is a separating and disengaging of the light from the darkness in the soul of man,—that so the light, brought into direct relation with the fountain of all light, may disperse the darkness and overcome it. The renewed man, knowing that he has an adversary, knows also that this adversary is not his very self, but another; who, resisted, will flee from him; that all dominion by the other exercised upon him is an usurped dominion, which it will be a righteous thing for God to bring to an end; and thus is able to cry, with the widow in the parable, '*Avenge me of mine adversary*,' or rather, since men seek of a judge not vengeance, but justice,—'*Do me right on mine adversary*,' being, as this is, no other than our daily petition, 'Deliver us from evil,' or 'from the Evil *One*,'—from him who is the source and centre of all evil.

'*And he would not for a while*.' When it was asserted just now that the strength of the parable lay in the *unlikeness* between the righteous judge of the world, and this ungodly earthly judge, it was not intended to deny that to man God often *seems* as this unjust Judge, with an ear deaf to the prayers of his people. For even the elect are impatient in affliction; they expect a speedier deliverance than He always wills to vouchsafe them; and count that they have a claim to be delivered so soon as ever their voices are heard on high.[1] Left long, as they count length, to the will of their enemies, in the furnace of affliction, they are tempted to hard thoughts of God, as though He took part with the oppressors, at any rate was contented to endure them, while the cry of his afflicted people was as nothing in his ears. They are ready

[1] Augustine, *Enarr.* 2ª *in Ps.* xxxiv. 17.

to exclaim, they do exclaim with the storm-tost disciples, 'Carest Thou not that we perish?' It is this very temptation, to which the faithful in hours such as these are exposed, that the parable is intended to meet.

There is recorded for us next, not of course what the judge spoke aloud, scarcely what he spoke in his own hearing, but the voice of his heart, as it spoke in the hearing of God.[1] '*But afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary*[2] *me;*' or '*wear me out,*' as it might be rendered. Stirred to do her right by no other motive than a selfish regard for his own interrupted ease, he yet '*will avenge her,*' if so to be quit of her importunities, and not plagued by her more. The same

[1] Bernard: 'God hears in the heart of the thinker that which even the thinker himself hears not.'

[2] Ὑπωπιάζῃ = sugillet, a pugilistic word; ut sub oculis vibices et maculæ luridæ existant (Wahl). The same emphatic word (1 Cor. ix. 27) describes the discipline by which St. Paul kept under or, as it is in the Revised Version, 'buffeted' his body. There, as here, another reading, ὑποπιάζῃ or ὑποπιέζῃ, has some authorities in its favour. But the birth of this reading, here at least, is easy to trace; transcribers thinking the other too strong a word for anything which the widow could effect; for how could she punish him *till his face became black and blue?* But Bengel well: 'This exaggeration is very appropriate to the character of an unjust and impatient judge.' It is exactly this exaggeration of language which selfishness uses where its own ease is threatened: thus σκύλλειν, to annoy, means literally to flay; its Spanish equivalent 'ahorcar,' to strangle; we English complain of being plagued, visited with the 'plague,' when we have only been a little troubled; an Italian or Frenchman would declare on the same provocation that he had been 'assassinated,' 'assassinato' or 'assassiné;' and these examples might easily be multiplied. Beza's obtundat is happy; ne me obtundas hâc de re sæpius (Terence). There is a curious variety in the English renderings here; 'condemne me' (Wiclif); 'hagge on me' (Tyndale); 'rayle on me' (Cranmer); 'make me weary' (Geneva); 'defame me' (Rheims); 'weary me' (Authorized Version); 'wear me out' (Revised Version), with a marginal notice that 'bruise' would be the closest rendering. There are no doubt other passages in which each of the seven English Versions has an independent rendering of its own, differing from all the others, but I cannot call such to mind.

motive, and not that the disciples were more pitiful than their Lord, moved them to intercede for the woman of Canaan, that she might obtain what she asked: 'Send her away; for she crieth after us' [1] (Matt. xv. 23). This parable and that miracle serve each as a commentary on the other (cf. Ecclus. xxxv. 17).

Between it and the lesson of encouragement which it contained the Lord may have paused for a little, and then resumed: '*Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him?*' In the first clause of the sentence the emphasis should be laid on '*unjust*;' in the other, the epithet of goodness or righteousness, which should complete the antithesis, is omitted, as being of necessity included in the name, God. If the '*unjust judge*' is moved by prayer to do right at last, shall not the just '*God avenge his own elect*'? And the antithesis should be carried through all the members of the sentence. As the righteous God is opposed to the unrighteous judge, so the '*elect*,' the precious before God, to the widow, the despised among men; their mighty crying to her impotent clamour; and the '*day and night*' [2] which these prayers of theirs fill, to the time, short by comparison, during

[1] The endeavour to obtain redress by long-continued crying, and by mere force of importunity to extort a boon or a right obtainable in no other way, is quite in the spirit of the East. Chardin (*Travels in Persia*) tells us that the peasants of a district, when their crops have failed, and they therefore desire a remission of taxes, or when they would appeal against some tyrannical governor, will assemble before the gate of the Shah's harem, and there continue howling and throwing dust in the air (Job ii. 12; Acts xxii. 23), refusing to be silenced or driven away, till he has sent out and demanded the cause, and thus given them at least an opportunity of stating their griefs; or sometimes they would beset him riding through the streets, and thus seek to gain, and often succeed in gaining, their point, not from his love of justice, but from his desire to be freed from annoyance (Burder, *Orient. Illust.* vol. ii. p. 382).

[2] Ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός here = πάντοτε of ver. 1. Our English '*cry*' too weakly renders the original βοᾶν, which is = mugire, whereby Tertullian renders it; a *mighty* trying (Gen. iv. 10; Jon. iii. 8; Jam. v. 4) is here attributed to the elect: though the word expressing this is hard to find.

which her importunities beset the judge. The certainty that they will be heard rests not, however, on their mighty crying as its ultimate ground, but on their election of God; which is, therefore, here urged,[1] and they named '*his elect*,' this being here, among their many names, the most appropriate; compare Dan. xii. 1: 'At that time thy people shall be delivered, *every one that shall be found written in the book*.' The Revised Version, which has restored the true reading here in the Greek, has, as a necessary consequence, been compelled to change the English text, and for the words, '*though he bear long with them*,' to substitute '*though he is long suffering over them*.'[2] I cannot say that the words as they now stand, come out in their meaning very clearly to me;

[1] Bengel (*in Matt.* xxiv. 22): 'Where the power of the temptation exceeds the ordinary strength of the faithful, election is brought in.'

[2] This καὶ μακροθυμεῖ (for such, and not μακροθυμῶν, is undoubtedly the true reading) ἐπ' αὐτοῖς has given rise to much discussion. Some refer αὐτοῖς to the oppressors on whom the vengeance is taken: '*Shall not God avenge his elect, though He bear long with their oppressors?*' Wolf, with reason, objects, 'Christ is not alluding to the wicked on whom vengeance is to be taken.' But μακροθυμέω is not necessarily, I delay *punishment*, but merely, I delay, I wait patiently: see Heb. vi. 15; Jam. v. 7, 8; Job vii. 16; Ecclus. xxxv. 18 (in the Greek xxxii. 18); as Grotius well points out: 'In this word there is the meaning of delay, which as it is profitable to a debtor so is grievous to him who is suffering wrong.' Suicer (*Thes.* s. v.), who has given the meaning rightly ('although He proceed slowly to avenge them') has much good on the parable. The proverb may be brought into comparison: 'God has his own hours, his own delays.'—Hassler (*Tübing. Zeitschr.* 1832, pp. 117–125) objects to this explanation, and finds here a description of God's patience with his suppliants, as contrasted with the fretful irritation of the judge under the solicitations of the widow: '*Shall not God avenge his own elect, when also He is patient toward them?*' shall He not do them right, and so much the more, seeing their reiterated prayers do not vex or weary Him, as that widow's did the judge, arouse no impatience, but only extreme compassion, in his heart? Possibly the Vulgate, Et patientiam habebit in illis? means this; and Luther: Und sollte Geduld darüber haben? This interpretation is not novel. Homberg (*Parerga*, p. 146) long ago proposed it: and Wolf (*Curæ*, in loc.) sums up the meaning thus: 'The patience of God is here referred to his listening to the prayers of the elect, and this is made probable by the opposition of the example of the unjust judge, who did not listen patiently to the complaint of the widow.'

but the key to them probably lies in the words that follow. He may be slack in avenging his people, as 'men count slackness' (Rev. vi. 10; Ps. xxxv. 17; lxxiv. 10; xciv. 3), as compared with their impatience; but, indeed, '*He will avenge them speedily*,' not leaving them a moment longer in the fire of affliction than is needful, delivering them from it the instant that patience has had her perfect work; so that there is, and is meant to be, an apparent contradiction, which yet is no real one, between ver. 7 and 8. The relief, which to man's impatience tarries long, indeed arrives speedily; it could not, according to the loving counsels of God, have arrived a moment earlier.[1] Not while Lazarus is merely sick, not till he has been four days dead, does Jesus obey the summons of the sisters whom He loved so well (John xi. 6). The disciples, labouring in vain against a stormy sea, must have looked often to that mountain where they had left their Lord; but not till the last watch, not till they have toiled through a weary night, does He bring the aid so long desired (Matt. xiv. 24, 25).

The concluding words, '*Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*' are perplexing, for they appear to call in question the success of his whole mediatorial work.[2] But though there are other grounds for

[1] Unger (*De Par. Jes. Nat.* p. 136): 'The words "though he is long suffering" and "speedily" are opposed to each other; the former, perhaps, should be referred to the opinion of men (meaning that He is to come, though He may seem slow in coming), the latter to the wise counsel of God.' Cf. Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps.* xci. 6: 'That which seems to thee long is really short: all these things quickly pass away: What is the long life of a man to God's eternity? Dost thou wish to be long lived? Behold the eternity of God. For thou regardest thine own few days, and in thy few days wouldest that all things were fulfilled. What are all things? The damnation of all the wicked and the crowning of all the good. Wouldst thou have these things fulfilled in these thy days? God fulfils them in his own time. Why dost thou suffer and make weariness? He is eternal, and waits: join thy heart to the eternity of God, and thou shalt be with him eternally.'

[2] They were used by the Donatists, when the Church urged against them her numbers and her universality ('for all heretics are in fewness

believing that the Church will, at that supreme moment, be reduced to a little remnant, yet the point is here, not that the faithful then will be few, but that the faith even of the faithful will have almost failed. The distress will be so urgent when the Son of man shall at length come forth for deliverance, that the hearts of his elect themselves will have begun to fail them for fear. The lateness of the help Zechariah describes under images of the old theocracy,—Jerusalem shall be already taken, and the enemy within its walls, spoiling and desolating, when the Lord shall come forth, his feet standing on the Mount of Olives, to fight against its enemies (xiv. 1–5). All help will seem utterly to have failed. so that the Son of man at his coming will hardly '*find faith*,' —or rather, '*that faith—upon earth*'—the faith, namely, which hopes against hope, and believes that light will break forth even when the darkness is thickest; and believing this, does not faint in prayer.[1] The words throw light on other words of our Lord's; receiving light from them again: 'for the elect's sake,' lest their faith also should fail, and so no flesh should be saved, 'those days shall be shortened' (Matt. xxiv. 22).[2]

and in part:' Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps.* xxxi. 2). The Donatists answered (applying this prophecy to their own day), that the Lord himself had declared the fewness of the faithful; how He should hardly find faith on the earth.

[1] Theophylact: 'Faith is the basis and foundation of all prayer.' Augustine: 'If faith fails, prayer dies away: for who prays without belief?' Godet draws out very happily the force of this πλήν: 'I fear not that the Judge should fail of his duty. What *alone* disquiets me is lest the widow should fail of hers.'

[2] Vitringa's explanation of the parable (*Erklär. d. Parab.* p. 960 seq.) is curious. The unjust judge represents the Roman emperors, the importunate widow the early Church, seeking to plead its cause before them, and to find in them deliverance from its oppressors. The emperors, after a long while, undertook its defence, ceasing themselves, and not suffering others, to persecute it more. Stranger still is the interpretation of Irenæus (v. 25), and of the author of the treatise, *De Antichristo*, 37. The widow is the earthly Jerusalem, Israel after the flesh, which, forgetful of God, turns to the unjust judge, that is, to Antichrist, despiser alike of God and men (ver. 2), for aid against him whom she falsely believes her adversary, namely Christ.

PARABLE XXIX.

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.

LUKE xviii. 9–14.

SOME interpreters have found in this parable, as in that of Dives and Lazarus, a prophecy of the rejection of the Jews, with the reception into God's grace of the Gentiles; the Pharisee representing for them that whole nation which would assuredly have accepted him as embodying its ideal—the publican representing the Gentiles, with whom these hated ministers of Roman oppression were commonly classed. They see in the one the Jew, glorying in his own merits, and proudly extolling himself in these, but through this very pride and self-righteousness failing to become partaker of the righteousness of God; in the other the Gentile, who meekly acknowledging his vileness, and repenting his sins, obtains the grace which the Jew has missed.[1] So long as no more is claimed by the advocates of this interpretation than that Jew and Gentile illustrated on the largest scale the solemn truths which are here declared, it may very fairly pass. But

[1] So Vitringa, *Erkl. d. Parab.* p. 974. Augustine too (*Enarr. in Ps.* lxxiv. 8) allows this application, though not as the primary: 'Taking this in a wider sense, we may understand it as of the two peoples, the Jews and the Gentiles, the Pharisee standing for the Jewish people, the Publican for the Gentiles. The Jewish people boasted of their merits, the Gentiles confessed their sins.' So H. de Sto. Victore (*Annot. in Luc.*): 'The Pharisee signifies the Jewish people, who from the laws of justification extol their own merits, and fall away because of their pride. The humbled Publican signifies the Gentile, who is placed afar off from God, but confesses his sins, and by his lamentations draws nigh unto God and is exalted.'

the words which introduce the parable, '*And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others*,' words which must give the law to its interpretation, refute this when made the primary intention with which it was spoken. For who were these '*certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous*'? Assuredly not Pharisees, nor any who avowedly admired Pharisees, as did the great body of the Jews. What profit would it have been to hold up to such the spectacle of a Pharisee praying as this one prays in the parable? *They* would have seen nothing unseemly in it; they would have counted it the most natural and fittest thing in the world that he should pray exactly in this fashion. But a disciple, one already having made some little progress in the school of Christ, yet in danger, as we are all in danger, of falling back into pharisaic sins, such a one would only need his sin to be plainly shown to him, and he would start back at its deformity; he would recognize the latent Pharisee in himself, and tremble and repent.[1] It was in some of his own disciples and followers, that the Lord had detected symptoms of spiritual pride and self-exaltation, accompanied, as these will be ever, with a contempt of others: and it is to their disease that He proceeds in the parable to apply a remedy.

'*Two men went up into the temple to pray*,' at one, no doubt, of the stated hours of devotion (Acts iii. 1; Isai. lvi. 7), '*the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican;*' a Brahmin and a Pariah, as one might say, if preaching from this Gospel in India—the Pharisee, representing all those who, having

[1] Greswell arrives at the same conclusion, although by another line of argument (*Exp. of the Par.* vol. iv. p. 247, sqq.): 'Of what use in a moral point of view would it be to hold up to the Pharisee the true picture of himself and his sect? or what hope could there be of correcting his characteristic vices, whatever they were, by laying them bare, and exposing them openly and nakedly before himself? Such an exposure might be well calculated to irritate and offend, but not to reform or amend them; for it cannot be supposed that they would willingly be parties in their own disgrace, or patiently acquiesce in their own condemnation.'

made clean the outside of the platter, have remained ignorant of all the uncleanness within—have never learned to say, 'Deliver me from mine adversary,' do not so much as know that they have an adversary; the publican, an example of all those who have found their sins an intolerable burden; and now yearn after One who shall deliver them from these and from the curse of God's broken law. Christ will make his disciples understand how much nearer to the kingdom of God is such a man than the self-complacent Pharisee, or than any who share in his spirit and temper; that he *may be* within that kingdom, while this other is certainly without.[1]

'*The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself.*' It is a mistake, growing out of forgetfulness of Jewish and early Christian customs, to urge this *standing* of the Pharisee in his prayer as an evidence already displaying itself of his pride. The parable itself contradicts this, for the publican, whose prayer was an humble one, stood also (ver. 13). But to pray standing was the usual manner of the Jews (1 Kin. viii. 22; 2 Chron. vi. 12; Matt. vi. 5; Mark xi. 25); however, in moments of a more than ordinary humiliation or emotion of heart, they may have exchanged this attitude for one of kneeling or prostration (Dan. vi. 10; 2 Chron. iv. 13; Acts ix. 40; xx. 36; xxi. 5). The Church owes this, as so much in the external features of its worship, to the Synagogue.[2] Its *stations* of prayer were so called, because *standing* the Christian soldier repelled the attacks of his spiritual enemy. At the same time, when we weigh the word of the original, this '*stood*' may very well be emphatic, indeed we may confidently assert that it is. It implies that he, so to speak, took his stand, planted and put himself in a prominent attitude of prayer; so

[1] Gregory the Great (*Mor.* xix. 21) wittily likens this Pharisee, and all who, because of their victory over certain temptations, are exalted with pride, and so perish through their very successes, to Eleazar, who killed the elephant, but was himself crushed by its falling body (1 Macc. vi. 46): 'In the battle he wounded and struck down an elephant, but fell himself beneath the beast which he destroyed.'

[2] See Bingham, *Christ. Antt.* xiii. 8. 3; Vitringa, *De Synagogâ*, p. 1105.

that all eyes might light on him, all might take note that he was engaged in his devotions (Matt. vi. 5).[1] The words are not always combined as our Translators have combined them, but rather as follows: '*The Pharisee stood by himself*,[2] *and prayed thus*:'—*separatist* in spirit as in name,[3] and now also in outward act, he desired to put a distance between himself and all unclean worshippers (see Isai. lxv. 5). The other construction, however, should be adhered to.

His prayer at first seems to promise well; '*God, I thank thee;*' for the Pharisees, as Grotius well observes, 'did not exclude the divine help. But they who use this language of thankfulness are frequently ungrateful to that help, allotting, as they do, to themselves the first share in virtuous actions, to God the second; or so recognizing common benefits, as to avoid fleeing as suppliants to that peculiar mercy which their own sins require.'[4] Thus it was with this man; while a due

[1] Tirinus: 'The Pharisee stood with a proud and uplifted heart, as if provoking God to judgment;' Godet: 'The term σταθείς denotes an attitude of confidence and even of hardihood.' On the whole attitude of the publican, compare Cyprian, *De Orat. Dom.* ad init.; and Ambrose, *De Off. Minist.* i. 18. 70.

[2] So Cameron, and J. Cappellus in the *Critici Sacri*, who make πρὸς ἑαυτόν = καθ' ἑαυτόν.

[3] Hesychius: 'Pharisee; set apart, separated, pure.' Bernard: 'He gives thanks not because he is good, but because he is alone; not so much for the good things which he has, as for the bad things which he sees in others.'

[4] An interesting anecdote is told of the writer of these words, which connects itself with this parable. Grotius, returning in 1645 from Sweden to Holland, where he proposed to pass the evening of his days, was wrecked on the coast of Pomerania. He made his way with difficulty to Rostock, where mortal illness, brought on by the hardships and dangers he had undergone, acting on a body already infirm, overtook him. Being made aware of his danger, he summoned Quistorp, a high Lutheran theologian, not unknown in the history of the Lutheran Church, to his side. I will leave to this latter to tell the remainder of the story in his own words: 'I drew nigh and found the sick man almost in his last agony. I spoke to him and told him that nothing would have pleased me more than to have met him in health and held conversation with him. To this he replied, God has willed it thus. I then proceeded to admonish him to prepare himself for his blessed

recognition of God's grace will always be accompanied with deep self-abasement, confessing, as we must, how little true we have been to that grace, how short we have fallen of what we might have been, with such helps at command. And thus the early promise of the Pharisee's prayer quickly disappears; for under the pretence of thankfulness to God, he does but thinly veil his exaltation of self; and he cannot thank God for the good which he fancies that he finds in himself, without insulting and casting scorn upon others for the evil which he sees, or fancies that he sees, in them. He thanks God, but not aright;[1] thanks Him that he is '*not as other men are*,' or still more emphatically, '*as the rest of men are*,' distributing the whole of mankind into two classes, putting himself in

journey, to acknowledge himself a sinner, and to grieve for his misdeeds, and as in my talk I touched upon the publican who confessed himself a sinner and prayed that God would have mercy upon him, he made answer, *I am that publican.* I then went on and committed him unto Christ, besides whom there is no salvation, and he rejoined, All my hope is placed in Christ alone. With a clear voice I then recited in German that German prayer which begins, Herr Jesu Christ, wahrer Mensch &c.; and folding his hands he followed me under his breath. When I had ended I asked if he had understood me? He replied, I understood well. I then went on to recite from the Word of God such things as are wont to be recalled to the memories of those on the point of death, and asked if he understood me? He replied, I hear your voice, but find it hard to understand the words. When he had said this he fell into complete silence, and a little while afterwards gave up the ghost.' When one thinks of all which must have divided Grotius the Arminian and Quistorp the Lutheran, each too a foremost leader in his own camp, it is deeply interesting to note how in that supreme moment everything which kept them apart falls out of sight, alike on one side and on the other. In Christ, and in his free grace as the one hope of sinners, they are at one. To this, and to this only, the one points; in this, and in this only, the other rests. Quistorp's letter, which is not addressed to Calov,—as I stated in some former editions, relying on second-hand information which betrayed me here into more than one inaccuracy,—but to Elias Taddel, Professor of Theology at Rostock, is reprinted in Krabbe's *Aus dem kirchl. und. wissenschaftl. Leben Rostocks*, 1863, p. 383.

[1] Augustine says here (*Serm.* cxv. 3), with an eye to the Pelagians, the ingrati gratiæ, 'ungrateful for grace': 'What therefore is he who impiously fights against grace, if he is blamed who is proud in his gratitude?'

a class alone, and thrusting down every one else into the other. And as he cannot think too good things of himself, so neither too bad of others. They do not merely fall a little short of his perfections, but are '*extortioners, unjust, adulterers*,'—and then, his eye alighting on the publican,[1] of whom he may have known nothing but that he *was* a publican, he drags him into his prayer, making him to furnish the dark background on which the bright colours of his own virtues shall more gloriously be displayed;—finding, it may be, in the deep heart-earnestness with which the contrite man beat his breast, in the fixedness of his downcast eyes, proofs in confirmation of the judgment which he passes upon him. *He*, thank God, has no need to beat his breast in that fashion, nor to cast his eyes in that shame upon the ground.

So perfect is he in the fulfilment of the precepts of the second table. He now returns to the first; in that also he is faultless. '*I fast twice in the week.*' He has his works of supererogation. Moses appointed but one fast-day in the year, the great day of atonement[2] (Lev. xvi. 29; Num. xxix. 7); but the devouter Jews, both those who were, and those who would seem such, the Pharisees above all, kept two fasts weekly,[3] on the second day and the fifth. '*I give tithes of all that I possess;*' or rather, '*of all that I get.*'[4] He, another Jacob, has made the same promise to God as the patriarch of old: 'Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee' (Gen. xxviii. 22; cf. xiv. 20). The law

[1] Augustine (*Enarr.* 1[a] *in Ps.* lxx. 2): 'This is no longer to exult, it is to insult.'

[2] Called therefore 'the fast' (Acts xxvii. 2), 'the feast of fasting' (Philo).

[3] The Latin Fathers are led astray by τοῦ σαββάτου here (in the Vulgate, sabbato), and understand the Pharisee to say that he fasted twice *upon the Sabbath*, whatever they may have understood by this (see Augustine, *Ep.* xxxvi. 4). But the week was entitled τὰ σάββατα, or as here, τὸ σάββατον (cf. Mark xvi. 9; 1 Cor. xvi. 2), deriving its title from its chiefest day.

[4] Ὅσα κτῶμαι = quæ mihi redeunt. It is only the perfect κέκτημαι which means '*I possess*,' *i.e.* I *have* acquired. All the English Versions, with the Vulgate (quæ possideo), share in a common error.

commanded only to tithe the fruits of the field and increase of the cattle (Num. xviii. 21 ; Deut. xiv. 22 ; Lev. xxvii. 30) ; but he, no doubt, tithed mint and cummin (Matt. xxiii. 23 ; Luke xi. 42), *all* that came into his possession (Tob. i. 7, 8), down to the trifles about which there was question, even in the Jewish schools, whether it was obligatory to tithe them or not (Hos. xii. 8). He will thus bring in God as his debtor ; misusing those very precepts concerning fasting and paying of tithes, given to men, the first to waken in them the sense of inward poverty and need, the second to remind them that whatever they had was *from* God, and should therefore be *to* God, making even these injunctions to minister to his self-conceit and pride. Acknowledgment of needs, or confession of sin, there is none in his prayer,—if that can be called prayer, which is wholly wanting in these.[1] 'Had he then,' asks Augustine, 'no sins to confess? Yes, he too had sins ; but, perverse and knowing not whither he had come, he was like a sufferer on the table of a surgeon, who should show his sound limbs, and cover his hurts. But let God cover thy hurts, and not thou : for if, ashamed, *thou* seekest to cover them, the physician will not cure them. Let Him cover and cure them ; for under the covering of the physician the wound is healed, under the covering of the sufferer it is only concealed ; and concealed from whom? from Him to whom all things are known.'[2]

[1] Augustine (*Serm.* ccxc. 6) : 'Wast thou come to pray or to praise thyself? Thou saidst that thou haddest all, thou soughtest as one that needed nought. How then didst thou come to pray?' And *Serm.* cxv. 6 : 'It is not enough not to pray to God, he must praise himself, and moreover insult him who prays.' Godet : 'It was not so much a prayer in which he thanked God as a congratulation addressed to himself.'

[2] Augustine, *Enarr.* 2ª *in Ps.* xxxi. 2 ; *Serm.* cccli. 1 : 'The Pharisee rejoiced less in his own health, than in the comparison of it with the diseases of others. It would have been more profitable for him, since he was come to the physician, to show by confession where he was ill, rather than to dissemble as to his wounds and to dare to triumph over the scars of another. It was no wonder, therefore, if the publican, who was not ashamed to show what he deplored, went away cured rather than he.' Cf. Chrysostom, *De Pœnit. Hom.* ii. 4.

It will aggravate our sense of the moral outrage involved in the Pharisee's contemptuous reference to his fellow-worshipper, if we keep in mind that in him we behold one who at this very moment was passing into the kingdom of God, who had come, in the fulness of a contrite heart, to make, as seems evidently meant, the first deep confession of his sins past which had ever found utterance from his lips, in whom amid sore pangs the new man was being born. How ugly a thing does the Pharisee's untimely scorn appear, mingling as a harshest discord with the songs of angels, which at this very moment hailed the lost who was found, the sinner who repented. To him let us now turn. '*And the publican, standing afar off*,' not afar off from God, for the Lord is *nigh* unto them that are of a contrite heart, '*would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven*,' much less then his hands and his face (1 Tim. ii. 8; 1 Kin. viii. 54; Heb. xii. 12; Ps. xxviii. 2), to that dwelling of the Holy One; for, like the prodigal, he had 'sinned against heaven' (Luke xv. 18), would have exclaimed like Ezra, 'O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens' (ix. 6). He stood '*afar off*,' not that he was a proselyte or a heathen, or had not full right to approach, for he also was a Jew, but in reverent awe, not venturing to press nearer to the holy place; for he felt that his sins had set him at a distance from God, and until he had received the atonement, the propitiation which he asks for, he could not presume to draw nigher. Moreover, he '*smote upon his breast*,' an outward sign of inward grief or self-accusation [1] (Nah. ii. 7; Luke xxiii. 48), as one judging himself, that he might not be judged of the Lord; acknowledging the far heavier strokes which might justly light upon him;

[1] Augustine (*Serm.* lxvii. 1): 'To beat the breast is nothing else than to rebuke that which lies hid in the breast, and by the visible blow to chastise the secret sin;' for, as elsewhere he says: 'What is a penitent save one who is angry with himself?' and again, 'The beating of the breast is the contrition of the heart.' Bengel: 'Where is sorrow, there is smiting.'

at the same time crying, '*God be merciful*[1] *to me a sinner*,'[2] or '*to me, the sinful one;*' for as the Pharisee had singled himself out as the most eminent of saints, or indeed as the one holy in the world, so the publican singles himself out as the chief of sinners, the man in whom all sins have met—a characteristic trait! for who, when first truly convinced of sin, thinks any other man's sins can equal his own (1 Tim. i. 15)?

And he found the mercy which he sought. His prayer, like incense, ascended unto heaven, a sacrifice of sweet savour, while the prayer of the Pharisee was blown back like smoke into his own eyes; for 'God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble:' '*I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.*'[3] Not merely was he justified in the secret unsearchable counsels of God, but he '*went down to his house justified*,' with a sweet sense of forgiveness received shed abroad upon his heart; for God's justification of

[1] Köcher (*Analecta*, in loc.) brings out the force of ἱλάσθητι here: 'The force of the word ἱλάσθητι is such as at once to embrace and to indicate the meritorious cause of propitiation, that is to say the bloody passion and death of Christ.'

[2] Augustine (*In Evang. Joh. Tract.* 12): 'He who confesses his sins and accuses his sins is already acting in union with God. God accuses thy sins: if thou also accuse them, thou wilt join thyself to God. The man and the sinner are, as it were, two things. That thou art called man is of God's work: that thou art called sinner is the work of thine own manhood. Blot out thine own work, that God may make his work whole. Thou must hate in thyself thine own work, and love in thyself the work of God.' Cf. *Serm.* xxxvi. 11; *Enarr. in Ps.* lxvi. 5; *Enarr. in Ps.* xxxix.: 'He spared not himself, that God might spare him; he accused himself, that God might excuse him; he punished himself, that God might deliver him.'

[3] The received reading, δεδικαιωμένος . . . ἢ ἐκεῖνος, is without the authority of one single uncial MS., being an almost unauthorized emendation in the Elzevir edition. The question lies between ἢ γὰρ ἐκεῖνος, which has most outward authority in its favour, but is hardly intelligible (see Winer, *Gramm.* p. 277), and παρ' ἐκεῖνον, which, with less external support, has yet been received, I believe rightly, in the later critical editions. It is probable that ΠΑΡ having by mistake been written, ΓΑΡ, the insertion of ἢ and the change of ἐκεῖνον into ἐκεῖνος followed, as needful to make the words render up any sense at all.

the sinner is indeed a *transitive* act, and passes from Himself to its object. The Pharisee meanwhile went down from the temple, his prayer ended, with the same cold dead heart with which he went up.[1] By that '*rather than the other*' Christ does not mean that the publican *by comparison with the Pharisee* was justified, for there are no degrees in justification, but that he absolutely was justified, was contemplated of God as a righteous man,[2] and the other not;[3] that here the words were fulfilled, 'He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away;' 'Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off' (Ps. cxxxviii. 6; Isai. lvii. 15; Job v.

[1] Crashaw, in his *Divine Epigrams*, sums up the whole very well:

'Two went to pray: oh! rather say,
One went to brag: th' other to pray.
One stands up close, and treads on high,
Where th' other dares not send his eye.
One nearer to God's altar trod,
The other to the altar's God.'

[2] It is interesting to find the Pauline δικαιοῦσθαι anticipated here, not merely in the thing, for that of course, but in the word itself, which, in this sense at least, we are wont to attribute exclusively to a later development of doctrine. As was to be expected, it is in the Evangelist who was St. Paul's companion that we find it. On the Pauline element, so plainly to be traced in this Gospel, see Holtzman, *Die Synoptischen Evangelien*, 1863, pp. 389–491.

[3] It is characteristic that this, the very truth which the parable was uttered to teach, should be denied by the chief commentators of the Roman church. Thus Maldonatus: 'He does not mean either that the Publican was actually justified, or that the Pharisee was actually damned, although Euthymius thus understands it.' He might have added greater names; Tertullian, for instance (*Adv. Marc.* iv. 36), affirms 'the one went down reprobate, the other justified;' and Augustine: 'For in the Pharisee pride goes down from the temple as damned, and in the Publican humility goes up before the sight of God as approved.' But Roman Catholic expositors care very little for the Fathers, when the teaching of these clashes with later developments of doctrine. It is only fair to add that Tertullian writes elsewhere (*De Orat.* 13) in the other sense: 'The Publican, who prayed in humiliation and dejection not only of word but of countenance, departed more justified than that most insolent Pharisee.'

11; xl. 11, 12; 1 Pet. v. 5, 6).[1] And the whole parable fitly concludes with words not now for the first time uttered by the Lord, for see Luke xiv. 11, but which would well bear repetition: '*For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*'[2] (cf. Prov. xxix. 23). The saying constitutes a beautiful transition to the bringing of the children to Jesus, the next incident recorded by the Evangelist.

[1] Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* xciii. 12): 'The one was proud in his good deeds, the other humble in his bad. . . . God was better pleased with humility in bad deeds than with pride in good.' These are striking words, yet will not bear close examination. There may be, and was here, a 'humility *after* bad deeds,' but there is no 'humility *in* bad deeds,' since in *every* sin there is a root of pride out of which it grows, a daring of the creature to lift itself up against the Creator; and again, there can be no superbia *in bonis*, they ceasing to be good, so far as in them this pride mingles.

[2] Augustine: 'Behold, brethren, a mighty miracle. God is high; thou upliftest thyself and He flees from thee; thou humblest thyself, and He descends unto thee;' and of this Pharisee (*Enarr.* 2ª *in Ps.* xxxi. 4): 'He would not humble himself by a confession of his wickedness; he was humbled by the weight of God's hand.'

PARABLE XXX.

THE POUNDS.

LUKE xix. 11–27.

MUCH that might have been fitly said upon this parable has been anticipated in treating that of the Talents. The reasons for affirming them to be, not different reports of the same parable, but parables altogether distinct from one another, were then given; nor shall I, save very briefly, repeat them here.[1] The words with which St. Luke introduces the parable are important for its right understanding: '*He added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.*' It was uttered then to repress impatience, to teach the need of a patient waiting for Christ; and, as we further find, of an active working for Him till the time of his return.[2] Such was its aim as regarded those who had yielded themselves without reserve to Him, as servants to their Lord. But He had also other hearers on this occasion, such as had not indeed thus attached themselves to Him, but a multitude drawn together by wonder, by curiosity, and by other mingled motives. These, with a certain good will toward Him and

[1] Chrysostom (*In Matth. Hom.* 78) distinctly affirms them to be different: and had not Augustine believed them so, we may confidently assume that in his work *De Consensu Evangelistarum* he would have sought to bring them into harmony.

[2] Godet: 'The dominant idea of this parable is of a time of trial which must needs come between the departure and return of the Lord to prepare the judgment which shall fix the position of every man in the state of things which shall follow the Coming.'

his doctrine, and so long as in his presence acknowledging his influence, were not the less exposed to all the evil influences of their age, and in danger of being drawn into the great stream of hostility now running so fiercely and so fast against Him. To this danger they would be exposed still more when his immediate presence should be withdrawn from them, when his ignominious death should have seemed to give the lie to all his lofty pretensions. For them is meant that part of the parable (ver. 14, 27) concerning the citizens, who would not have one of their fellows set over them as their king, followed him with their hate, disclaimed obedience to him even while it was yet uncertain whether he should be set over them or not; but who at his return payed the fearful penalties of their guilt.

'*He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return*' (cf. Mark xiii. 34). In the great Roman empire, where the senate of Rome, and afterwards its emperors, though not kings themselves, yet made and unmade kings, such a circumstance as this must have been of frequent occurrence. Thus Herod the Great was at first no more than a subordinate officer in Judæa; flying to Rome before Antigonus, he was there declared by the senate, through the influence of Antony, king of the Jews.[1] In like manner his son Archelaus must personally wait upon Augustus, before inheriting the dominions left him by his father; and even then did not inherit them as king but only as ethnarch. Spoken as this parable was at or in the neighbourhood of Jericho, where stood the magnificent palace which Archelaus built, his example may very easily have presented itself to the Lord. History furnishes many other examples, for it was felt over the civilized world, in the striking words of the historian of the Maccabees;—'whom they [the Romans] would help to a kingdom, those reign; and whom again they would, they displace' (1 Macc. viii. 13).—That this claimant of a crown was one well born, a

[1] First, procurator (Josephus, *Antt.* xiv. 9. 2); afterwards, στρατηγός (xiv. 11. 4); then βασιλεύς (xiv. 14. 5, 6; cf. xv. 6. 7).

'*nobleman*,'[1] is only what we might naturally expect. No other would be likely to lift his hopes so high; or would give sufficient promise of maintaining himself on his throne, to render the higher authority willing to instal him there. The epithet has its highest fitness; for who was of such noble birth as He who, even according to the flesh, came of earth's first blood,—was the Son of Abraham, the Son of David (Matt. i. 1); who, besides all this, was the eternal and only-begotten Son of God?

The kingdom which this nobleman goes to receive can scarcely be, as some understand it, another and a distant ingdom; but rather he goes to receive the investiture of that kingdom, whereof before he was one of the more illustrious citizens, and which after a while he returns to reign over as its king. Either supposition, it is true, would suit *his* case, whom this nobleman represents. He went to be enthroned in his heavenly state, and in heaven to rule over all as the Son of man (Heb ii. 7, 8; Phil. ii. 9–11). But it may with equal truth be affirmed that He went to receive solemn investiture of that earthly kingdom which He had purchased with his blood, and which hereafter He shall return and claim as his own, sitting on the throne of his father David; and the parable itself suggests this last as the kingdom intended here. It is over fellow-citizens that the nobleman departs to obtain a dominion; else would there be no meaning in their message, '*We will not have this man to reign over us*.' It is among fellow-citizens that we find him on his return exercising kingly functions; setting his servants over five cities, and over ten (ver. 17, 19); having power of life and death, and executing extreme judgment on those that had sent messages of hate and defiance after him (ver. 27).

Before, however, he went, '*he called his ten servants*,'—or rather, '*ten servants of his*,'[2]—'*and delivered them ten*

[1] Εὐγενής. On the distinction between εὐγενής and γνναῖος see Aristotle, *Rhet.* ii. 15. The first is well-born, the second undegenerate.

[2] Besides that the original requires this, it would be absurd to suppose that, with the immense households of antiquity, which, as Seneca says,

pounds, and said unto them, Occupy,'[1]—or, as in the margin, '*Employ in trading,*'—'*till I come.*' The sum which they shall thus '*occupy*' is very much smaller than that which, in St. Matthew, the man travelling into a far country committed to *his* servants there;[2] though I do not know that we need seek any explanation of this. How remarkable is this *still* ministry, these occupations of peace in which the servants of the future king shall be engaged, and that while a rebellion is raging. A caviller significantly enough demands, 'Why did he not distribute *weapons* to his servants? Such under the circumstances would have been the most natural thing to do.' Doubtless *the most natural*, as Peter felt, when he cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest; as all have felt, who have sought to fight the world with its own weapons, and by the wrath of man to work the righteousness of God. Such identifying of the Church with a worldly kingdom has been the idea of the Papacy, such of the Anabaptists. Men in either case feeling strongly that there must be a kingdom of God, have supposed that it was immediately to appear (ver. 11), and that they, and not Christ Himself, were to bring it into outward form and subsistence; instead of seeing that their part was, with the diligent but silent occupation of their talent, to lay the rudiments of that kingdom, and so to prepare the world for the outbreaking of it; which yet should only be when the King Himself returned in his glory.

'*But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.*' Many understand here that his fellow-citizens, aware of his

were *nations* rather than *families* (see Becker, *Gallus*, vol. i. p. 196), this nobleman, of consequence enough to be raised to a royal dignity, had but ten servants belonging to him.

[1] '*Occupy*' is here a Latinism; thus *occupare* pecuniam, because money in business, or put out to interest, does not lie idle. This use of 'to occupy' is sufficiently common in our Elizabethan English; thus in North's *Plutarch*, p. 629, Phocion, refusing Alexander's gift, says, 'If I should take this sum of money and *occupy it not*, it is as much as I had it not;' cf. Judg. xvi. 11; and my *Select Glossary*, s. v.

[2] A talent was = 243*l.* 15*s.*; a pound (mina) = 4*l.* 1*s.* 3*d.* (see the *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Antt.* s. v. Drachma, p. 360).

purpose, give him notice beforehand that they, however he may receive at other hands the dominion over them, will own no allegiance to him. The words describe more probably an embassage which these despatch to the court whither he is gone, to anticipate and counterwork him there, to proclaim how unwelcome his exaltation will be;—'We do not desire that this man should be made our king.'[1] It was exactly thus that a faction of the Jews, in the case of Archelaus, sent ambassadors to the court of Augustus to accuse him there, and if possible to hinder his elevation over them.[2] The Jews were especially Christ's fellow-'*citizens*,' for, according to the flesh, He was of the seed of Abraham, a Jew (Rom. ix. 5; John iv. 22), and a member of the Jewish polity; and they '*hated Him*' not merely in his life, and unto death; but every persecution of his servants, the stoning of Stephen, the beheading of James, the persecutions of Paul, and all the wrongs done to his people because they were his, these each and all were messages of defiance sent after Him, implicit declarations upon their part that they would not have Him for their king. Twice before yet He had gone to receive his kingdom, this very declaration found formal utterance from their lips,—once when they cried to Pilate, 'We have no king but Cæsar;' and again, when they remonstrated with him, 'Write not, The King of the Jews' (John xix. 21; cf. Acts xvii. 7). But the strictest fulfilment of these words is to be found in the demeanour of the Jews after his Ascension, their fierce hostility to Christ in his infant Church (Acts xii. 3; xiii. 45; xiv. 18; xvii. 5; xviii. 6; xxii. 22; xxiii. 12; 1 Thess. ii. 15). When we give this parable a wider range, and find its full and final accomplishment, not at the destruction of Jerusalem, but at the day of judgment,—and it is equally capable of the narrower and the wider interpretation,

[1] The speaking of him in the third person, '*this man*' (τοῦτον), seems a strong confirmation of this view; and πρεσβεία (see Luke xiv. 32) is an ambassage rather than a message.—The word is so rendered in the Revised Version.

[2] Josephus, *Antt.* xvii. 11. 1; *B. J.* xi. 2. 1.

—then these rebellious citizens will be all, Gentiles and Jews alike, who have denied their relation and subjection to Jesus, as their Lord and King (in this different from the unfaithful servant, for he allows the relation, and does not openly throw off the subjection, but yet evades the obligation by the false glosses of his evil heart), and this message will embody itself in the great apostasy of the last days, which shall be even as this is, not an evading of the subjection due unto Christ; but a speaking of proud things against Him (Rev. xiii. 5, 6; Dan. vii. 25; 2 Thess. ii. 1–10); not merely disobedience but defiance, such as, not content with resisting his decrees, shall provoke and challenge Him to the conflict (Ps. ii. 2).

On the following verses (15–23) there is little to say which has not been said already (see p. 276). At his return, the nobleman, now a king, distributes praise and rewards to as many as have been faithful to him while he was away,—punishments more or less severe to them who have abused the opportunity and taken advantage of his absence.[1] The rewards are *royal*, and this consistently with the royal dignity wherewith he is now invested; he sets them over cities. In the other parable it is otherwise (Matt. xxv. 14–30); there the master, being but a private man, claims no such power of putting his servants in high places of authority; each parable being thus in perfect keeping and harmony with itself through all its minor details, which is another evidence of their original distinctness. The rewards too, as they are kingly, so are they also proportioned to the fidelity, we may say also to the capacity, of the servants. To him whose pound had made ten pounds it is said, '*Because thou hast been faithful in a very little*,[2] *have thou authority over ten*

[1] We may compare the conduct of Alexander, rewarding and punishing after his return from his long Indian expedition, from which so many in Western Asia had believed that he never would come back (see Thirlwall, *Hist. of Greece*, vol. vii. p. 62, seq.).

[2] Origen's quotation (*Con. Cels.* viii. 74), 'Thou wast found faithful in a very little city, come thou therefore unto the great one,' sounds like an inexact reminiscence of these words of Christ.

cities:' to him whose pound had made five it is said, '*Be thou also over five:*' to one a Decapolis, to the other a Pentapolis assigned. Surely there is vouchsafed to us here a glimpse of the beneficent *activity* of the glorified saints, a commentary on the συμβασιλεύσομεν of St. Paul (Rom. viii. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 12; Rev. iii. 21).[1] We hear nothing of the other seven servants, but need not therefore conclude that they had wholly lost or wasted the money entrusted to them.[2] Three are adduced as representatives of classes (cf. Luke xiv. 18-20), and the rest, since all that we are to learn is learned from these, for brevity's sake are passed over.—'*Those who stood by*,' and are bidden to take his pound from the slothful servant,[3] and give it to him that had shown himself the faithfullest, or, at all events, the ablest of all, are the angels, who never fail to appear and take an active part in scenes descriptive of the final judgment (Matt. xiii. 41; xvi. 27; xxiv. 31; 2 Thess. i. 7; Jude 14; Dan. vii. 10). Their wondering remonstrance, '*Lord, he hath ten pounds*,' with the manner in which this is at once overruled, so that the lord proceeds without so much as seeming to hear, while yet he refutes it, is intended to fix our attention on the paradox and seeming unfairness of that law of the kingdom, which decrees that the poor should become poorer still, and the rich become ever richer. It is a law which Christ here, by this remonstrance and by the inattention with which it is received, will with all emphasis declare to be the law of

[1] Godet: 'The ten and the five cities represent moral beings who are in a state of lower development, but whom the faithful in glory are commissioned to raise to their divine destination.'

[2] Thus Ambrose (*Exp. in Luc.* viii. 95): 'There is no word as to the others, who, like prodigal debtors, had wasted what they had received.'

[3] It is characteristic that the σουδάριον (sudarium), which, not exerting himself, this lazy servant does not need for its proper use ('in the *sweat* of thy face shalt thou eat bread,' Gen. iii. 19), he uses for the wrapping up of his pound. That he had it disengaged, and free to be turned to his purpose, was itself a witness against him.

highest righteousness, the everlasting law of his kingdom[1] (Prov. ix. 8, 9).

When the king had thus distributed praise and blame, rewards and penalties, to those who stand in the more immediate relation of servants to him, to his own household, he proceeds to execute vengeance on his enemies, on all who had openly cast off allegiance to him, and denied that they belonged to his house at all (Prov. xx. 8). '*But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.*' In the Marriage of the King's Son the vengeance on the open enemies goes before that on the hypocritical friend or servant (Matt. xxii. 7, 11); here it follows after. This slaying of the king's enemies *in his presence*, is not to be in the interpretation mitigated or explained away, as belonging merely to the outer scheme of the parable, and introduced because such things were done in Eastern courts (1 Sam. x. 27; xi. 12; Jer. lii. 10),[2] and to

[1] Dschelaleddin, whom Von Hammer styles 'the great religious poet of the modern East,' has this same image of life, with all its powers, opportunities and faculties, as a sum of money to be laid out for God:

'O thou that art arrived in being's land,
Nor knowest how thy coming here was planned;

From the Shah's palace to life's city thou
On his affairs wast sent, at his command.

Thee thy Lord gave, thy faithfulness to prove,
The sum of life, a capital in hand.

Hast thou forgotten thine entrusted pound?
Dazed with the market's hubbub dost thou stand?

Instead of dreaming, up and purchase good;
Buy precious stones, exchange not gold for sand.

Thou at the hour of thy return wilt see
Thy Monarch set, with open book in hand.

What thou from Him receivedst He will bring
To strict account, and reckoning demand:

And a large blessing, or a curse from Him
Thy faithfulness or sloth will then command.'

[2] Compare Suetonius, *Vitellius*, 14.

add an air of truthfulness to the narrative. Rather it belongs also to the innermost kernel of the parable. The words set forth, fearfully indeed, but not so that we need shrink from applying them to the Lord Jesus, his unmitigated wrath against his enemies,—but only *his* enemies exactly as they are enemies of all righteousness,—which shall be revealed in that day when grace shall have come to an end, and judgment without mercy shall have begun[1] (Isai. lxiii. 1–6; Rev. xiv. 10; xix. 11–16; 2 Thess. i. 7–9; Heb. x. 27). All this found its commencing fulfilment in the destruction of Jerusalem, and in the frightful calamities which accompanied that day of doom; then doubtless was *a* coming of Christ to judgment; but it will only obtain its full accomplishment when the wickedness of an apostate world, having drawn to a single head, shall in the destruction of him, the personal Antichrist, and of all that are gathered under his banner, receive its final doom.[2]

Some words of Thomas Jackson, the great Arminian divine of the seventeenth century, will form a fitting close: 'Let others esteem of them as they list, our Saviour's parables, in that they contain the secret mysteries of the

[1] Augustine often uses this and its parallel, Matt. xxii. 13 (as *Con. Adv. Leg. et Proph.* i. 16; *Con. Faust.* xxii. 14, 19), in argument with the Manichæans, who, contrasting the severity of the God of the Old Testament with the lenity of the God of the New, argued from this that they were not, and could not be, one and the same God. But, he replies, there is no such contrast. As there is love in the Old Testament, so there is fear, and what should awaken fear, in the New; and he urges the terribleness of this doom in proof. The Manichæans could not betake themselves to their ordinary evasion, that the passage was an interpolation or a corruption, as they accepted the parables (see Augustine, *Con. Faust.* xxxii. 7) for part of the uncorrupted doctrine of Christ.—We may compare Heb. i. 13, 'till I make thine enemies *thy footstool*;' and we learn from Josh. x. 24 what the image is, that lies under these words.

[2] When therefore Godet says, 'Verse 27 represents the settling of accounts of the Messiah with the Jewish people, as verses 15–26 his settling of accounts with the Church,' this statement cannot be regarded as exhaustive.

heavenly kingdom, shall ever, as they always have done, seem to me the most sovereign rules for planting faith, and the matters contained in them the most precious objects for a Christian's choicer thoughts to work upon in his selected hours.'

APPENDIX.

THE following list includes all the more important works on the parables, of which I am aware. At the same time it makes no attempt at completeness. Indeed, so doing it would defeat its own object as a help to study, embracing as it then must so much of very subordinate worth, or of no worth at all. I have here set down only such works as I know, or have reason to suppose, possess some value. Most, but not all, of those named have come under my own eye.

I. WORKS INTRODUCTORY TO THE STUDY OF THE PARABLES.

C. M. Pfaff: Comment. de rectâ Theologiæ parabolicæ et allegoricæ Conformatione. Tubingæ, 1720.

G. C. Storr: Dissertatio Hermeneutica de Parabolis Christi. Tubingæ, 1799. 4to. [Opusc. Academ. Tubingæ, 1796, p. 89, seq. 8vo.]

G. A. van Limburg Brower: De Parabolis Jesu Christi Specimen academicum inaugurale. Lugd. Batav. 1825. 8vo.

F. W. Rettberg: De Parabolis Jesu Christi. Gottingæ, 1827. 4to.

A. H. A. Schutze: De Parabolarum Jesu Christi indole poeticâ Commentatio. Gottingæ, 1827. 4to.

A. F. Unger: De Parabolarum Jesu naturâ, interpretatione, usu Scholæ exegeticæ rhetoricæ. Lipsiæ, 1828. 8vo.

S. Goebel: Die Parabeln Jesu methodisch ausgelegt. Gotha, 1879, 1880. 8vo.

II. WORKS ON THE PARABLES IN GENERAL.

A. Salmeron: Sermones in Parabolas Evangelicas. Antverpiæ, 1600. 4to.

B. Keach: Gospel Mysteries unveiled, or an Exposition of all the Parables. London, 1701. Fol.

F. Bragge: Practical Discourses on the Parables of our Blessed Saviour. London, 1704. 2 vols. 8vo.

C. Vitringa ; Schrifftmässige Erklärung der Evangelischen Parabolen, Franckfurt and Leipzig, 1717. 4to.

S. Bourn: Discourses on some select Parables of our Saviour. London, 1763. 2 vols. 8vo.

J. L. Ewald: Betrachtungen über die Gleichnisse unsers Herrn. Leipsic, 1786. 8vo.

W. Dodd: Discourses on the Miracles and Parables of Christ. 2nd edit. 1809. 8vo.

A. Gray: A Delineation of the Parables of our Blessed Saviour. 2nd edit. Edinburgh, 1814. 8vo.

B. Bailey: Exposition of the Parables of our Lord. London, 1828. 8vo.

F. G. Lisco: Die Parabeln Jesu exegetisch-homiletisch bearbeitet. Berlin, 1831. 8vo.

E. Greswell: Exposition of the Parables and of other parts of the Gospels. London, 1839. 6 vols. 8vo.

De Valenti: Die Parabeln des Herrn für Kirche, Schule und Haus erklärt. Basel, 1841. 8vo.

H. W. J. Thiersch: Die Gleichnisse Christi, nach ihrer moralischen und prophetischen Bedeutung. Frankfurt, 1867.

III. WORKS ON PARTICULAR PARABLES.

The Seven Parables in Matthew xiii.

J. F. Reuss: Meletema de Sensu septem Parabolarum Matth. xiii. prophetico. Haun. 1733. 4to.

The Sower.

Taylor: The Parable of the Sower and of the Seed. In five Sermons. 1634. 4to.

Jorckins: De Nativâ Verbi Divini Efficaciâ ad loc. Luc. viii. 4–15. Vitembergæ, 1746. 4to.

G. Muir: The Parable of the Sower illustrated and applied. London, 1769. 8vo.

E. Harwood: On the Parable of the Sower. London, 1776. 12mo.

S. Stennet: On the Parable of the Sower. 1787. 12mo.

E. Irving: Lectures on the Parable of the Sower, constituting the second volume in his Sermons, Lectures, and Occasional Discourses. London, 1828. 8vo.

The Tares.

P. Heylin: The Parable of the Tares expounded and applied. London, 1659. 4to.

G. Muir: The Parable of the Tares, in twenty-one Sermons. Paisley, 1771. 8vo.

The Labourers in the Vineyard.

J. L. Mosheim: Meditatio in Parabolam de Operariis in Vineâ. Duisburgi, 1724. 4to.

A. H. Faust: In Parabolam de Operariis in Vineâ Cogitationes. Helmstadii, 1725. 4to.

F. S. Loeffler: Explanatio Parabolæ de Operariis in Vineâ. Lipsiæ, 1726. 4to.

J. R. Kiesling: Dissert. philolog. de Procuratore in Vineâ Domini ad illustrandum Evang. Matth. xx. 8. Lipsiæ, 1740.

F. A. Zulich: Meditatio ad Parabolam de Operariis in Vineâ. Jenæ, 1741. 4to.

J. H. Schramm: Dissert. de Operariis in Vineâ. Jenæ, 1775. 4to.

The Marriage of the King's Son.

H. V. Becker: Meditationes de Veste Nuptiali. Rotosch, 1775. 4to

The Ten Virgins.

T. Johnston: Christ's Watchword, being the Parable of the Virgins expounded. London, 1630. 4to.

B. Stonham: The Parable of the Ten Virgins opened, 1676. 4to.

T. Shephard: The Parable of the Ten Virgins opened and applied. 1695. Fol.

T. Beverley: The Parable of the Ten Virgins, with an Apology for the hope of the Kingdom of Christ appearing within the approaching year 1697. London, 1697. 4to.

J. G. Rau: Quo consilio Jesus Christus Parabolam de decem Virginibus proposuerit, anquiritur. Erlangæ, 1798. 4to.

The Prodigal Son.

R. H. [R. Henderson]: Arraignement of the Creature at the bar of Religion, Reason, and Experience; an Explanation of the historie and misterie of the Prodigal Son. 1631. 4to.

O. Sedgwick: The Parable of the Prodigal, containing the riotous Prodigal, or the sinner's aversion from God; the returning Prodigal, or the penitent's conversion to God: the Prodigal's acceptation, or favourable entertainment with God. London, 1660. 4to.

O. Grew: Meditations upon the Prodigal Son. London, 1684. 4to.

T. Goodman: The Penitent Pardoned, or the Parable of the Prodigal Son. 8th ed. London, 1724. 8vo.

The Unjust Steward.

J. C. Schreiter: Historico-critica Explicationum Parabolæ de Improbo Œconomo Descriptio. Lipsiæ, 1803. 8vo.

L. L. Bertholdt: Comment. quâ nova Parabolæ de Œconomo Injusto Interpretatio tentatur. Erlangæ, 1814. 4to.

D. Schulz: Ueber die Parabel vom Verwalter, ein Versuch. Breslau, 1821. 8vo.

C. G. L. Grossman: Comment. Historico-exegetica de Procuratore, Parabolâ Christi ex re provinciali Romanorum illustratâ. Lipsiæ, 1823. 4to.

C. W. Niedner: De loco Commentar. Lucæ xvi. 1–13 Dissertatio. Lipsiæ, 1823. 4to.

F. C. Gelpke: Novum tentamen Parabolam Jesu de Œconomo Injusto interpretandi. Lipsiæ, 1829. 8vo.

H. L. Hartmann: Comment. de Œconomo Improbo apud Luc. xvi. 1–13. Lipsiæ, 1830. 8vo.

G. L. Steinwender: Ueber d. Gleichniss vom ungerecht. Haushalter. Stuttg. 1840.

Harnisch: Auch eine Erklär. d. Gleichnisses vom ungerecht. Haushalter. Magdeb. 1847.

F. Gaupp: Die Parabel vom ungerecht. Haushalter, in Tholuck's Liter. Anzeiger, 1839.

Ensfelder: Interprétation de la Parabole de l'Econome Infidèle, in the Revue Théol. de Colani, 1852.

The Rich Man and Lazarus.

H. Teelman: Comment. Crit. et Theolog. in cap. xvi. Evang. Lucæ. Amstel. 1695. 4to.

T. Cruso: Discourses on the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. London, 1697. 8vo.

A. L. Königsmann: Dissert. de Divite Epulone immisericordiæ non accusato. Kilon. 1708. 4to.

J. L. Flöreisen: Dissert. de infelici Divitis felicitate. Giss. 1714. 4to.

G. Sommelius: Dissert. in narrationem de Divite Epulone et Lazaro. Lund. 1768. 4to.

C. G. Klinckhardt: Super Parabolâ J. C. de Homine Divite et Lazaro Comment. Exegetico-practica. Lipsiæ, 1831. 4to.

The Pounds.

F. L. Cremer: Dissert. de diverso Exitu ac Mercede Servorum fidelium atque ignavorum, Luc. xix. 11–27. Harder, 1751. 4to.

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